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# A Study of Young Volunteers and Volunteering in a Cape Town Based, International NGO

by

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the reward of the

Degree of Master of Development Studies  
and Social Transformation

Department of Sociology  
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## *Declaration*

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

23.03.05

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Dear Committee

This is to certify that I have agreed that Ms Nina Hansen Wiik could submit her MPhil dissertation even though it exceeds the recommended maximum number of words as set by the faculty. In my view the work is not wordy and to have artificially limited the word count would have affected the quality of the final product.

Yours sincerely

Prof Ken Jubber  
Supervisor

## Acknowledgments

Like many postgraduate students I have also encountered obstacles relating to culture, time, language, weather, facilities, computers, relationships and gender. I am truly grateful for these, as they have challenged and stimulated me to think and to clarify my path and direction.

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## Abstract

What motivates a group of young people from a disadvantaged community spend between 20 and 50 hours every week in a voluntary organisation in their area?

This dissertation has studied young volunteers aged between 18 and 28, who are working in a non-governmental organisation (NGO) operating in a disadvantaged local community on the Cape Flats in Cape Town, South Africa. The aim of this research was to gain knowledge of their motivations for being full-time volunteers for this NGO.

This is a qualitative, ethnographic study, which seeks to provide information about the young volunteers and volunteering in a descriptive way. The methods used for data collection have been participative observation, interviews, personal conversations, drawings of social network maps and a questionnaire. The numbers of interviewees are 12 in total, viz. 11 volunteers and the Manager of the NGO.

Clary et al (1992) created an empirical instrument that can be used to map out an individual's reasons for volunteering, namely the 'volunteers function inventory' (VFI), which suggest 6 main motivations for volunteering. This functional approach for studying motivation applies to volunteers in high-risk communities because it relates the individual's psychological functions to his/her experiences, current life situation and stage of development. The data analysis in this study indicates that there are several motivations at stake, which can operate at the same time as well as change over time. In Cole's recent study (2004), she found that there does not appear to be any *one* motivational reason for volunteering. People do volunteer work for different reasons, but for volunteers from high-risk communities, values are very important motivators: "I feel compassion toward people in need" seems to apply to the majority of the volunteers who participated in this study. In addition to value based motivations for volunteering, the following three motivations are to be found in this group of 11 volunteers: the social benefits of volunteering, the personal development of being a volunteer and, last but not least, the love for the work they are doing.

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# CHAPTER 1

## FOREWORD

### **My Background**

In 1998, when I was 20 years old, I completed my certificate of apprenticeship to work with children and adolescents. Long before then, I had known that I wanted to work with this age group. After working for one year at a primary school, I started my social work training at Oslo University College (OUC) in Norway, my country of birth. Here I completed the first two years of my BA. The second year's fieldwork brought me to a day-care centre for children with learning disabilities in Morogoro, Tanzania. It was an incredible experience, during which I saw more suffering than I had ever seen before, but it was also a period filled with happiness and inspiration. The fieldwork lasted for two months, and I left, knowing I would return to Africa some day. At the beginning of the third year of my BA studies, I was accepted for a joint programme between Skovtofte Pedagogic Institute in Copenhagen, Denmark and the University of Portsmouth in England, and spent a semester in each city. In June 2002, I completed my BA in European Social Work, focusing on children with challenging behaviour and their social network. In March 2003, I started the process of applying to the University of Cape Town's (UCT) MPhil programme in Development Studies and Social Transformation. At the time, I was studying Development Studies at the Centre for Multicultural and International Studies (SEFIA) at OUC. However, I wanted to obtain a Masters degree in development studies outside Europe, as I expected it to be less Eurocentric and focused on different perspectives than those of European Universities.

As a young girl, I had already been introduced to voluntary communal work through my parents' involvement in various organisations. These were neither political nor charity organisations, but were community development organisations and sports clubs. I was a member of the Young Women's Christian Association for many years, where I served as a member of the county board for three years. Environmental protection caught my interest, as did human rights. At the university in Oslo, I started an Amnesty International group with a friend. I was part of a big group of young

people who believed that they had to share because they were so wealthy in many ways. Norway was, after all, again at the top of the United Nations Development Programme's Index on Human Development in 2004. I belonged to the middle class in Norway, and my way of life was very different to and far removed from the ways of life of the thousands of people living on the Cape Flats. This is not to say that there are no social problems in Norway: My experience as a social worker has shown me that, although people in Norway are not starving to death, many people are nonetheless poor.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Way to the NGO**

Three weeks after finishing my last exam at SEFIA, I started my studies at UCT. The knowledge I had gained about South Africa and Cape Town during the course of my studies was minimal. I had never before heard about the area on the Cape Flats, in which the NGO I am writing about is located. How did I find it, then? The first course I did at UCT required 100 hours of internship with an NGO of our choice, with the objective of writing a funding proposal on behalf of this organisation. The supervisor of the programme found me a place at the Civic Office in Cape Town. After spending two weeks there, without finding any suitable projects, the course's supervisor and I agreed that it would be better to contact an NGO directly. At the Civic Office I met a social worker who told me about the NGO on the Cape Flats and the programmes they were running. After a few days, I had a very positive meeting with the Manager. I was so thrilled when he explained that they worked in primary schools and high schools with a preventative approach that I could not wait to get there. The next day, I started my internship at the NGO. After a short introduction to the staff and volunteers, I found myself cycling from school to school at the Cape Flats, together with three volunteers. The Life Skills programme I observed that day immediately captured my interest, and I decided that I wanted to do my research on this topic.<sup>2</sup> After the requirements of the course at UCT had been fulfilled, I stayed with the NGO and worked with them at camps, on fundraising initiatives, working days and other activities. We are still in touch.

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the type of measurement used, the percentage of poor people in Norway was 4.9% (OECD measurement) and 11.4% (EU measurement). Statistics of Norway (SSB) usually operates with a number ranging from 4 to 6% (SSB 2004).

<sup>2</sup> More details regarding the selection of the topic and my relationship to the NGO and its members can be found in chapter 3. Methodology.

worked with them at camps, on fundraising initiatives, working days and other activities. We are still in touch.

To do my best to accommodate the volunteers' wishes regarding confidentiality, all the personal names in this thesis are pseudonyms. A more detailed description of the exact location of the NGO on the Cape Flats will also not be provided. The NGO's real name will also not be disclosed but it will be referred to simply as 'the NGO' or 'the organisation' throughout the text.

### **Background to the Study**

In South Africa, that celebrated 10 years of democracy in 2004, the cause of civil society is particularly relevant. During the years of apartheid, the country was suffering and since it was no democracy, it was not a vital civil society. Within this context, this thesis thus focuses on an NGO and its young volunteers in a township outside Cape Town. Aid to development projects and programmes is big business, and the amount of money involved can be huge, for the donor as well as the recipient. The political and ideological aspects of the work and development projects of NGOs should be kept in mind.

However, these issues will not be discussed in depth in this thesis. The focus herein is on the volunteers who work for these organisations and, in particular, on the 11 volunteers working in an NGO on the Cape Flats, in the Western Cape, South Africa, whom I interviewed for this study. [An estimated 10 000 volunteers are serving 225 organisations in the Western Cape Province alone (Layton 2002)] During the time I<sup>Layton</sup> spent with the volunteers in this organisation, I was impressed by their passion and social commitment. It came to my attention that they were all living in the disadvantaged community they serve, and that many of them came from difficult circumstances. Consequently, I began to wonder what motivated them, as they were not typically well-off volunteers with a moral obligation to share their wealth with those less fortunate. What is it that makes young people between the age of 17 and 28 spend between 20 and 50 hours every week in a voluntary organisation? This thesis thus attempts to answer the question: why are they volunteering in the first place? Although recruiting volunteers might not be so difficult, keeping them in the

organisation for any length of time might prove problematic. Knowing what motivates volunteers is particularly useful information for any organisation that works with volunteers. A range of research has identified a variety of motivating factors for volunteering, such as moral obligation, reciprocity, altruism, self-interest, duty, professional requirements and chance. The motivating factors that will be discussed and referred to in this study are the ones described by Clary et al (1992) as the Volunteer Functions Inventory, which is presented in depth in chapter 4, Motivations for Volunteering.

There is no accurate information regarding the number of NGOs in the world, nor of the number of volunteers involved. What is known, though, is that civil society and NGOs have become very important in the development debate. Questions such as “What is development?”, “What are the means of development”, and “Has development really occurred?” are central in the debate. The answers will vary according to the different theories trying to explain development, such as Modernisation theory, Dependence theory, Marxism and Post Development theory. When development aid to the third world first began, the concepts of civil society and NGOs did not yet exist. Even after they came into existence, they remained marginal. The international development aid system was established at the height of the anti-colonialist movement in the post World War II era— and thus in a very different ideological context to the one that is relevant now. During that period, there was an extraordinary trumpeting to the cause of the state (Tvedt 1996:1): accordingly, the European nation-building project was globalised, the dominating development theories were state-centred, and the state-centred UN system was established as the first global institution. This ideology has changed, though, and today’s theories tend to express an assault on the state promoting advantages of the free market on the one hand and promoting civil society on the other. In the 1980’s, neo-liberals such as Margaret Thatcher, then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and Ronald Reagan, then President of the United States, regarded private organisations such as NGOs as the counterpart to the state’s powers of oppression.

In the 1960s, NGOs had been regarded as marginal actors complementing state-to-state aid. Their overall task was to secure and increase national support for aid in the donor countries. In the beginning of the 1980s, which is also called the NGO decade,

empowerment of marginal groups. Support for NGOs in the early 1980s was often based on the assumption that the state was either too weak or too bureaucratised to mean anything to the poor, or that the state was controlled by anti-popular forces. From this time there has been a focus on democratisation being equated with strengthening civil society, while reducing the role of the state. In the 1980s, the discussions about the so-called crisis of the welfare state led to greater interest in the private sector and the market sector.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the number of NGOs has increased dramatically, both community-based NGOs and international NGOs concerned with aid and development projects in the Third World.

## What are NGOs?

As globalisation and international trade are having an increasing impact on societies everywhere, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are becoming increasingly influential in world affairs. They are being consulted by governments as well as by international organisations like the United Nations, which have created associative status for them.<sup>4</sup> There are now tens of thousands of NGOs in the world, operating in most countries. These organisations are not directly affiliated with any national government, but do often have a significant impact on the social, economic and political activity of the country or region involved (Shreve and Galli 2002). The Explanation Guide (2004) states that “The phrase NGOs came into use with the establishment of the United Nations in 1945<sup>5</sup> with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter [1] for a consultative role for organisations that are not governments or members.”. At that time, many voluntary agencies, mainly American, had been involved in post-war relief in Europe and in Asia (Lissner 1977: 63).

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<sup>3</sup> Civil society, the state and the market are the three sectors that interface in the making of democratic societies (UNDP 1993: 1, as quoted by Tvedt 1996: 10). Tvedt (1996: 8) defines civil society as uncoerced human groups and relational networks of consensual associations that enable society to exist independently of the state.

<sup>4</sup> The UN is very liberal regarding which NGOs are to be granted associative status. Only 4% of the 500 applications between 1970 and 1993 were rejected (Månson 1997).

<sup>5</sup> NGOs have existed long before 1945, but were at that time known as ‘charity organisations’ (ibid).

There are various definitions of NGOs, but the one that seems to be widely accepted and used comes from the World Bank (2002a). Moreover, the World Bank plays an important role in worldwide development projects. The following section thus draws heavily on a detailed definition by this institution, as contained in the Bank's Operational Directive 14.70, as it is the foundation for understanding the concept of NGOs in this essay:

"NGOs are private organisations that pursue activities to relieve the suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development."

Although this definition can technically include for-profit corporations, the term is generally restricted to social and cultural groups, whose primary goal is not commercial. In wider usage, the term NGO can be applied to any non-profit organisation that is independent from government. NGOs are typically value-based organisations, which depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary service. Although the NGO sector has become increasingly professionalized over the last two decades, the principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key defining characteristics.

### **Categories and Typologies of NGOs**

Individual operational NGOs vary enormously according to their purpose, philosophy, sectoral expertise and scope of activities (World Bank 2002a). Some are relief or development-oriented; some are religious or secular; some stress service delivery or participation, and some are public-oriented, whereas others are private-oriented. Clearly, the term NGO is very broad and encompasses many different types of organisations. In the field of development, NGOs range from large, Northern-based charities such as CARE, Oxfam and World Vision, to community-based self-help groups in the South. They also include research institutes, churches,<sup>6</sup> professional

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<sup>6</sup> Not all definitions classify churches as NGOs. In the Northern countries, church and state is not separated as in many other countries, which can explain why churches are not within the NGO categorisation.

associations and lobby groups. Despite this diversity, two main categories of NGOs can be identified:

- Operational NGOs: Their primary purpose is to design and implement development-related projects.
- Advocacy NGOs: Their primary purpose is to defend or promote a specific cause, and to influence policies and practices.

It should be noted, however, that these two categories are not mutually exclusive. A growing number of NGOs engage in both operational and advocacy activities, and some advocacy groups, while not directly involved in designing and implementing projects, do focus on specific project-related concerns.

There are also several community-based organisations (CBOs): These organisations' purpose is to serve a specific population in a limited geographic area.

Operational NGOs are further often divided into

- National organisations: These organisations operate in individual developing countries.
- International organisations: These organisations are typically headquartered in developed countries, while carrying out operations in more than one developing country.

The latter categorisation is the most well known, comprising organisations such as the International Red Cross and the Save the Children Foundation. The borders between these categories of operational NGOs are flexible, though. In the case of the services of the Cape Flats NGO, on which this thesis is focusing, these are, for instance, based on the needs of the people in the community. However, the NGO is not a typical membership organisation or a CBO that serves or defends the case of its members only, such as a group founded to protect the forest in their community. The Cape Flats NGO is an operational NGO, and its main occupation is to design and implement development-related projects. Although its activities are based on the needs of the local community, it is not a community-based organisation, but a local branch of an

international NGO. The Cape Flats NGO is thus obliged to follow the International Mission Statement of the organisation, but in other respects is independent.<sup>7</sup> In order to understand the context within which the NGO is located and how it operates, as well as other related issues, these will be presented in the next chapter, chapter 2, The Context.

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<sup>7</sup> In the case of the South African headquarter of this NGO; however, there have been problems. This is mainly due to disagreements about whether the NGO should be economically independent of the national headquarter. Gaining this independence would have a positive impact for the funding situation. If it was independent from the South African national office, the NGO could then apply for funding from any source without having to obtain permission from the national office. The Cape Flats NGO has never been bankrupt, so technically, there was no reasons for the national headquarter to deny them independence after they had fulfilled all their requirements (which are unknown to me). I only have information from one side in this case (viz. the local office), but conversations with other volunteers in other similar NGOs confirm there are some problems between the national headquarter and local NGOs.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONTEXT

#### South Africa, the Western Cape and Cape Town



Figure 1. The South African Flag.

The Republic of South Africa is a beautiful and diverse country. The population in the country numbered 44.8 million people in 2001 (Statistics of South Africa 2004a). It has 11 official languages, and it is called the rainbow nation because of the rich variety of ethnic groups that constitute its population. Not all of these diverse ethnic groups, however, have enjoyed political equality and been enfranchised for long. Until 1994, South Africa was ruled by a white minority, which considered itself superior to the other races. The National Party government that was in power from 1948 until 1994 had implemented grand social engineering schemes, which separated the races and involved the forced resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people. The apartheid government eventually negotiated itself out of power, and the new leadership encouraged reconciliation. South Africa is now a democracy in which the African National Congress (ANC) holds power. In April 2004, President Thabo Mbeki was elected by parliament to a second five-year term of office, following the landslide general election victory of his ruling ANC. Mr Mbeki had played a central role both in planning the armed insurrection that caused the first cracks in the edifice of white rule and in the talks that led to its end (Reference-guides.com).



Figure 2. The ten years of freedom symbol

Although South Africa has recently celebrated 10 years of freedom, there is still a long way to go before true equality for the entire population is achieved. According to the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), South Africa is ranked 119th of 177 countries, given that poverty still engulfs 48.5% of the population. The average life expectancy is 48.8 years, and about 20% of the adult population is infected with AIDS (UNAIDS 2004).



Figure 3. Map of South Africa



Figure 4. The nine provinces of South Africa and the independent States of Lesotho and Swaziland.

The Western Cape is populated by 4.5 million people, and is the province in which the NGO studied for this thesis operates. There are many social problems in this province, such as poverty, high rates of HIV/AIDS, unemployment and crime. Simplistically put, non-whites who are fortunate to have a job are nonetheless likely to have lower status jobs and to earn less than their white counterparts (see Appendix 1). Although this has changed since 1994 and progress has been made, there are still major problems connected to unemployment in South Africa. According to the South African Police Service (2002), in respect of recorded violent crime only, the Western Cape had the second highest reported rate in the entire country during 2001/02, with 2,878 violent crimes per 100,000 of the population. Cape Town is the biggest city in the province with a population of 3.1 million in the metropolitan area. The racial categorisation shows that 57% of the inhabitants of this area are so-called 'coloureds' or of mixed race, 24% are white, 18% are black and 11% are Asian. In terms of religion, the vast majority (90%) are Christian, whilst 6% are Muslim, and 4% are Jewish, Hindu and other (City of Cape Town 2004).

My experience of Cape Town concurs with the description in the World Facts (2004, online, no page reference):

“Cape Town is a fascinating mosaic of Asian, European and African traditions. These streams of history flow together in the city but, particularly because of the legacy of the apartheid system, visitors to Cape Town are often amazed by the dramatic contrasts that remain between different areas. Nature, too, creates very different sub-climates around the mountain so the vegetation varies a great deal, as of course do the vistas. The city, however, is connected by fast freeways. Thus, twenty minutes from the wine farms of the leafy Constantia valley you could be on a beach, in the bustling city centre or in a shanty township. The racial division of suburbs ended in 1990, but racial and socio-economic differences between areas remain marked.”

Many positive achievements have occurred during the 10 years of democracy. However, the cruelty and the wounds left by the Apartheid regime will take a long time to heal, and it has left many scars. One area that is now trying to recover from the Apartheid regime is Cape Flats, where the NGO that I focus on here is operating.

## **Cape Flats & the Particular Area where the NGO is Located**

“In 1966 an area in Cape Town called District Six was declared a white area under the Group Areas Act of 1950, and by 1982, the life of the community was over. 60 000 people were forcibly removed to barren outlying areas aptly known as the Cape Flats, and their houses in District Six were flattened by bulldozers” (The District Six Museum 2004).<sup>8</sup>

One of the areas to which the people of District Six were forcibly moved, is also the home of the staff and volunteers of the NGO, and it is in this area that they implement their programmes and activities. This area houses a disadvantaged urban community. Disadvantaged is a much misused and overused word so it will be explained shortly in what terms this area is disadvantaged. The area is designated a “township”. In South Africa, the term “township” applies to many types of urban areas, but, under Apartheid, the term commonly came to mean a single-race residential development

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on this area and the forced removals see the District Six Museum, available at <http://www.districtsix.co.za>.

that confined non-whites who lived near or worked in white-only communities (Word IQ.com, undated). The few times that I did see another white person on the Cape Flats, I must confess that I, too, thought 'what are you doing here?' This was probably the same as what many of the local residents were thinking when they saw me there.

The 2001 census counted 228 480 people living in the area on the Cape Flats where the NGO studied for this dissertation is located.<sup>9</sup> There are 47 521 household units in this particular area with an average of 4.8 people in each household. The average number of people in the households where the volunteers live is 7.5, ranging from 2 to 9 people in the households. The number of households that live in a house or a brick structure on a separate stand or yard counts for 62%, whereas 2.85 % of the households live in informal dwellings or shacks (most commonly these are self-built structures made of wood and corrugated iron sheets). 28.5% of the households lives in town/cluster/semi detached houses. 2.55% lives in a house/flat/room in a backyard. The remaining 4.1% of the households lives in other forms for housing and/or is not applicable.

With regard to education, only 1.2 % have received higher education, and 4.4 % have no schooling at all. The majority of the people have some schooling, but only 1 in 3 has completed high school. 7 of the 11 volunteers I have interviewed completed high school. With regard to basic amenities, such as water, 93 % have piped water inside the dwelling. Almost everyone has electricity but that does not necessarily mean they can afford to use it, for example for heating in wintertime. The houses are seldom insulated and when the wind blows across the Cape Flats, it gets cold inside. At first I thought the area did not look too bad. In fact, I found some places very nice. Later I also noticed all the young men hanging around the street corners, all the barbed wire fences, and schools whose playgrounds are closed off because of a fear of gangs. I quickly realised that people who had no connection to the Cape Flats and who had never been there, were afraid of going there and told me that it was a very dangerous area. One of these people was a garage owner whom my flat mates and I visited often, as our car frequently broke down. After leaving the car there to be repaired, he asked whether I needed a lift, and I asked him to please take me to the nearest bus stop. He

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<sup>9</sup> This and the other statistics about the particular area on the Cape Flats were attached to an email from Tracy Daniels, Information Officer, Statistics South Africa, Western Cape 13.09.2004.



friendly but very determined voice, he said, "There is no way you are going there alone and by bus. If something happens to you, I will have a bad conscience the rest of my life." He thus ordered one of his mechanics to drive me there, although it was a 25-minute drive one way. I was very surprised by his reaction, because I had felt it was safe to go there by bus and because the owner and the mechanic were of the same "race" as the people in the NGO.

I soon came to understand those who are afraid of going there, as the area does not have a good reputation. It is characterised by a high unemployment rate, poverty, a high crime rate, alcoholism, gangsterism and other socio-economic problems. The unemployment rate in the area alone is 27 %. This is close to the national rate, which in September 2003 was estimated to be 28, 2% according to Statistics South Africa (2004c). There are, however, growing trends to develop parts of the Cape Flats, for example, in the industrial area. The implementation of one project was estimated to supply work to more than 5000 people, mainly locals.<sup>10</sup> Despite initiatives such as this, people are worried about their economic situation. Many of the volunteers regard gangsterism and drugs as the main problems on the Cape Flats, and they are not the only ones concerned about this situation. According to a public meeting held in their local area in February 2003, people in the community are also worried about the socio-economic situation, and the negative impact this has on children and young people. Gangsterism was the main concern of the people who attended the meeting. They also expressed the need for social development to offer alternatives to the youth of the suburb. André Gaum, the Western Cape Minister of Education is also worried:

"It is clear that the fabric of large segments of Western Cape society is being systematically destroyed by increasing endemic gangsterism." (Gaum 2002)

According to Gaum, the South African Police Services has identified the Cape Flats as one of the areas worst affected by gang-related activities. The following numbers from South African Police Service (2004) show that during 2003 the following number of cases were reported: 226 cases of rape, 83 murders, 163 illegal possessions of firearms, 829 drug related crimes, 1308 robbery with aggravating circumstances,

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<sup>10</sup> The local newspaper, 16 October 2003.

and 149 cases of neglect and ill-treatment of children. (To see how these figures compare with a more upmarket area of the Western Cape, and with the province as a whole, see Appendix 2). Research has shown that, in order to prevent juvenile crime, more effort would be needed to improve the youth's bond with the school (Lam 1998). Generally, children who behave well in general are more likely to stay in school. Reducing the number of pupils who are not at school for reasons of truancy or exclusion could thus significantly reduce the numbers of young offenders in a local area (Audit Commission, UK, 1998: 70). Those who drop out, or are being expelled from school, are often children who exhibit so-called 'problem behaviour'. Teaching children Life Skills and helping them with their behaviour problems is believed to offer a long-term solution to the crime problem in the area. The Life Skills Programme that is run by the NGO herein is an attempt to prevent juvenile crime and to help children behave more positively. This programme will be elaborated on later in the next section, when I describe the NGO and its operations in detail.

## **The NGO**

The NGO that is the focus of this study is a local branch of a worldwide NGO. It is a non-profit, community-based organisation involved in youth development and community outreach programmes. An NGO consists of many segments, which enable it to function properly and efficiently. In this section, I will describe the main segments, as illustrated in the following diagram:



Figure 5. The 7 segments of the NGO

The staff members of the NGO consist of the Manager, a full-time paid employee, a full-time administrator and a part-time administration volunteer. Their role is to plan programmes, apply for funds and make sure that the NGO continues to function. The plans and programmes themselves are implemented by a group of full-time volunteers, aged between 16 and 27, about 25 people in total. Within this group, some are more experienced than others and therefore hold higher positions in the hierarchy. In addition, the NGO also has a group of approximately five people who assist in running special events or camps. As can be seen from Figure 6 below, the structure in the NGO is typically hierarchical. At the top of the hierarchy are the Members of the Board, which consists of 3 people. As far as I have seen, they participate in special events, such as a Valentine's Day arrangement for high schools and in working days.



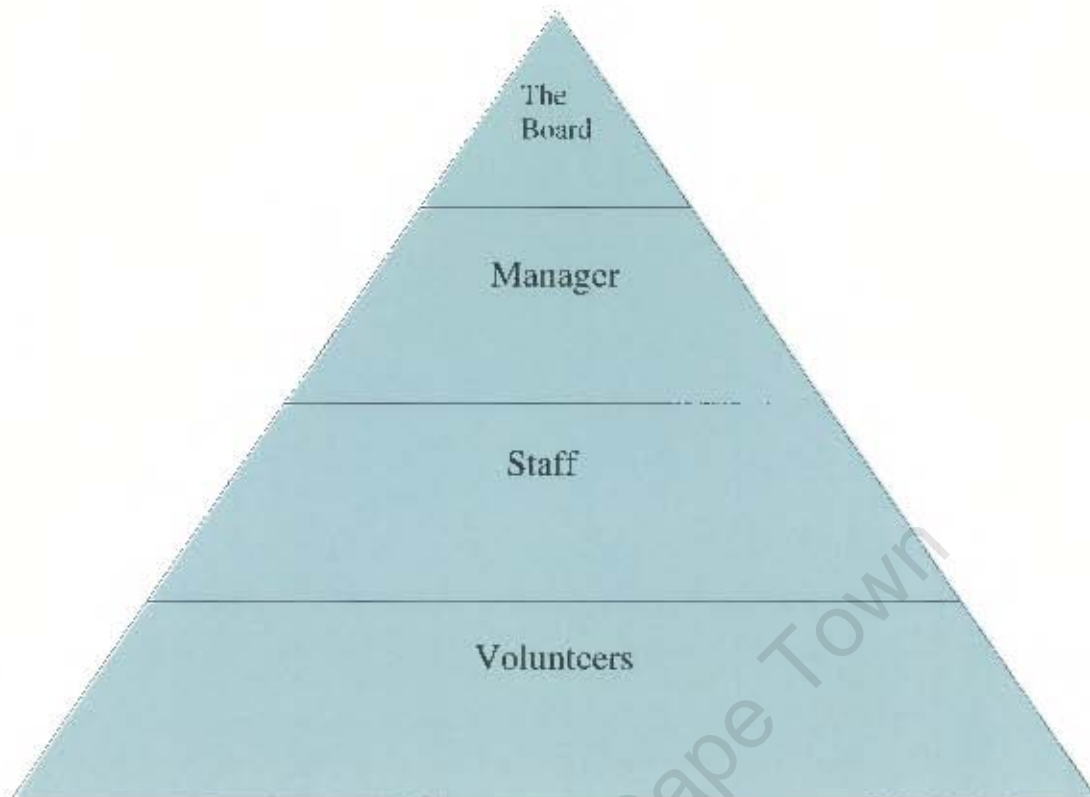


Figure 6. The hierarchy of the NGO

The current Manager came to the NGO in 1997 from a job that he felt had become too draining and time-consuming; he felt that it was time for him to move on. He had previously worked with disadvantaged children and adolescents, in particular street children, but he felt a strong urge to do preventative rather than remedial work:

“For every little one child that I managed to get home or off the streets, we got like five coming in, so after about eight years it was draining and I thought it has to stop so it was a matter of looking at how do we *stop* the kids coming on to the streets” (Interview with the Manager 22.06.2004).

When he joined the NGO, it was working with street children in a feeding scheme. Given the Manager’s previous experience in developing programmes for street children, he thus designed a preventative programme for the NGO, which is how the NGO began to grow into what it is today: a vital and active NGO with about 30 people involved in various programmes that all serve the community. Such

interventions do, however, cost money, and I will thus now look at the funding situation of the NGO.

## **Funding**

As is the case with many other non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations, this NGO, too, is struggling financially. It has never been bankrupt but it has to put in much effort and hard work to get the funds it needs. This local branch is not yet autonomous from the national office, but will most likely be granted autonomy in 2005. The Manager says that the major advantage of this greater autonomy is a more independent budget. At present, the money that is received from a European funder passes through the national office, and the NGO ultimately receives less money than the amount sent by the funder. The NGO's main funder is the European NGO, which also pays the Manager's salary. The other main source of income is the provincial education department, which is funding many of the programmes targeting primary and high school children. The NGO also does fundraising in the community, such as arranging concerts. The 2003 budget shows a total income of R732 000, whereas the NGO's expenses totalled R713 000. Moreover, for six months during 2003, the Manager did not receive a salary, which highlights the uncertainty of the economic situation. One reason for this is that the funding they receive to implement programmes and to arrange camps is only transferred *after* the programme or camp is finished. The economic situation seems to be more stable now, as the NGO has been granted funding for one of their main programmes over the next three years. This creates better opportunities to make long-term plans. It also eases the stress faced by the NGO earlier in 2004, when the European funder considered stopping all funding due to problems and misunderstandings between the NGO, the National Office and the funder.

Although these problems are in the process of being solved, funding remains an issue. As happens in other NGOs, money is moved around between their different programmes and expenses. The NGO is not allowed to spend any of the money it receives to run programmes on salaries. Although this is understandable, the Manager also said that it is good to give the volunteers a stipend, because they deserve it and because it will help the NGO to retain the volunteers. Most of them do, after all, come

from the same disadvantaged community as where they work, and many of them struggle financially. One solution for this is in the budgeting. When budgeting for a camp, the NGO will, for example, set the expenses for food and transport as slightly higher than the actual anticipated cost, and it will then use the excess to pay the volunteers. In the section about the volunteers (presented shortly after the section about the NGO's premises) I will come back to how much they are in fact paid, and how important these stipends are in motivating them to become and remain volunteers.

### **Premises**

The NGO is renting premises from the local municipality. Although the main advantage of this is that the rent is relatively cheap, the NGO has been moved around from time to time when the municipality needed the space for other purposes. The autumn of 2004 was particularly stressful, as the NGO was given an eviction order one day, which was withdrawn the next week, and then re-issued the week thereafter. The current premises are, fortunately, in a safer part of Cape Flats; nonetheless, the Manager expressed the view that the NGO is temporarily less safe, until the people in the area have become familiar with the members and its programmes. It takes time to build a trust relationship with the neighbours, but the Manager said this was not a major concern, as he felt that the NGO had a good reputation in Cape Flats (Personal conversation with the manager, undated). NGO personnel were more concerned about the building into which they will move as it was badly damaged. The Manager explained that this building had been acceptable at the time when the municipality decided that the NGO could buy it. Due to bureaucratic dawdling, however, the NGO could only occupy it several months later. The building was left empty in the interim, which resulted in it being vandalised and occupied by homeless people. The last time I attended a working day on the premises, the building had been set on fire, probably by vandals and we had to carry out what was left of the roof. Some of the walls and the floor do not have to be rebuilt, but everything else that could be taken out had been stolen, including the window frames.

Until the damage is fixed and the NGO can move, the staff and the volunteers work in a building which measures about 30 square metres. It is a single-storey, grey, brick

wall house with a big security gate, which is often left open as people come and go during the day. Grey concrete blocks on the ground guide you to an entrance where you pass a security door and the main door before you enter the hall. It smells vaguely of damp. The walls in the hall are decorated with many pictures and nicely made collages, showing the NGO's various activities. There are six chairs and an old laptop computer in the hall, placed on a very small table. To get into the two offices, you walk down a narrow corridor where two people meeting would have to pass each other walking sideways. On the right side is the toilet and a little hand basin. There is no kitchen in the building, so this basin also supplies drinking water and is where dishes are washed.

Opposite, on the left side of the passage, is the Manager's office. If the door is closed, no one enters unless it is very, very important. If it is open, you can enter the Manager's nine square metre office. It is furnished with a big desk, a computer, a shelf and a drawer with pots, cups and other kitchen equipment. There is also a coffee table and two chairs inside, which are often used by the volunteers. Two corners are filled with various objects and materials. The Manager is practising an open door policy, and I will come back to his style and relationship with the volunteers in chapter 4, Motivations for volunteering. The room is quite dark and there is a small window, which can hardly be opened.

When someone enters the other office, which is opposite the Manager's, the door has to be opened slowly, in case someone is searching for a file in the filing cabinet behind the door. The room is also furnished with two desks, two computers, a printer, a small photocopier, a shelf and a small heater, which is crucial in wintertime. The little window on the wall gives a hint of fresh air to Linda and Steve who work in this office. With only two rooms of this small size, the office facilities for the volunteers are not adequate. When they are meeting, it is in this office, as well as when they need to type a report, photocopy or file something. Several times a month, this is the meeting place for the majority of those involved in the NGO. The two meetings I attended on these premises took place outside, which works well when it is warm (unless the traffic is very heavy and noisy, because the building is close to a busy road). In wintertime, when it is too cold outside, it would be possible to have a meeting in the hall, if people were to sit on the floor and stand by the wall.

## **Volunteers**

The NGO has approximately 25 volunteers on whom they are completely dependent. In this section, I will describe why the volunteers are needed, how they are recruited, how they are rewarded with a stipend and their (lack of) contracts. More personal concerns, such as why the eleven individuals I interviewed became volunteers in the first place, what the NGO means to them and what their personal stories are, will be analysed in chapter 4, Motivations for volunteering.

The 11 volunteers I interviewed hold three different positions in the NGO. Two of these, Linda and Steve, are volunteering mainly in administration and office work. Although they are volunteers, they are older than most of the other volunteers, who view them as members of staff. In this study I refer to them as volunteers, unless otherwise specified. Six of the volunteers, viz. Martha, Melanie, Charles, Andy, William and Lenny, have been working for the NGO for a while. Their position in the Life Skills programme is that of core facilitators. The other three volunteers, Anna, Lee and Maria, are new recruits to the NGO but two of them have volunteered for other NGOs. When I use the term volunteers, I refer to the whole group of 11 unless I specify whom I am writing about.

### **The Need for Volunteers**

As explained in the paragraph on funding, the NGO only receives enough funding to provide a salary for the Manager and another member of staff. In order to run the programmes and to reach as many young people as possible, though, the NGO needs volunteers. Apart from occasional volunteers from abroad (during the 10 months I was involved with the NGO, they had another volunteer from Europe for a few months), all of the NGO's volunteers live on the Cape Flats. When I asked the Manager, whether it was an advantage that the volunteers came from and were living in the same disadvantaged community as the young people with whom they were working, he said:

“I think that possibly speaks more volume. I think for me or us it is important to be able to show that, ‘yes I am from the same community, I come from a similar background, I have similar experiences so I’m not coming from another area where things are a little bit different and my family is a bit more secure.’ Often that would be the challenge as the children could say; ‘look, you’re not from here, who are you to tell us what to do’” (Interview with the Manager 22.06.2004).

The volunteers themselves also highlighted this as an advantage, as it allowed them to use their own personal experiences to relate to the children of the same area.

### **Recruitment of Volunteers**

The recruitment of the volunteers happens mainly through 3 different channels:

1. Advertising;
2. Friends and acquaintances who are involved with or know about the NGO;
3. Programmes and camps run by the NGO for children and adolescents.

In addition, though, some volunteers simply appear at the NGO’s offices independently of the above, and ask if they can volunteer. From time to time, the NGO also advertises for volunteers in the local paper, especially when new, big projects are starting. Apart from that, they also receive free advertising when the local paper writes about the NGO’s programmes or fundraising events. The NGO is a youth organisation, meaning that the volunteers can be between the ages of 12 and 35, which is the NGO’s definition of youth. Although they do allow people older than 35 to volunteer too, the focus is on young people. Conversely, if volunteers are younger than 18, they need their parents’ permission. Before volunteers are accepted, they go through an interview process and fill in an application form. The Manager or Steve will go through the application form and talk with the candidate about their background and their reasons for wanting to join the NGO.

None of the volunteers I interviewed in this study were recruited through advertisements. Melanie wanted work experience with administration work and had previously approached another organisation. As they had enough people, they referred her to the NGO. Maria's parents are friends of the Manager and asked on behalf of their daughter if she could volunteer for the NGO. William was selected to go to a peer education camp while he was in high school and has volunteered for the NGO since then. Andy was involved in a project, where he met the Manager who invited him to join the NGO. The others, viz. Martha, Lee, Anna, Lenny, Steve, Charles and Linda, were recruited through people they knew in the NGO.<sup>11</sup>

The current volunteers at the NGO seem to be highly committed to the NGO. With regard to the statement in the Questionnaire, "I am very committed to the NGO", 9 of the volunteers graded themselves as 1 ("I strongly agree") or 2 ("I agree"). Only two graded themselves as 3 ("Neutral").<sup>12</sup> The NGO is pleased with this, as it needs volunteers who are responsible, who do their job with enthusiasm, and who are 'a positive face' for the NGO in the community. Steve, the Manager of the Life Skills Programme, expressed it this way to the volunteers:

"The face of the NGO will be *you* in the classrooms. Just because I speak first here does not mean I am the leader. We are all leaders. We are under scrutiny and people want to see if the NGO can perform, so that is a responsibility for all of you, so thank you very much for taking up this challenge."<sup>13</sup>

Nonetheless, even if the current volunteers seem to be committed to the programme, the Manager mentioned that better procedures regarding recruitments were needed:

"I think we constantly need to work on ways to recruit volunteers. I think that's a challenge for us. We can sometimes make a mistake because we're so desperately in need of volunteers" (Interview with the Manager 22.06.2004).

Although the NGO is a Christian organisation, not all the volunteers are Christians. The Manager said that this was not important, as it was more important that the

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<sup>11</sup> Information obtained from questionnaires and interviews.

<sup>12</sup> From section 5 in the questionnaire 'You and your relationship to the NGO'

<sup>13</sup> Steve speaking in a team meeting and training session for the Life Skills crew 21.04.2004.

volunteers were role models and able to 'walk the walk and talk the talk', which can often be challenging for the young people themselves. For example, if a volunteer tells a young person that he or she should not smoke because it is harmful, although the volunteer smokes, then this does more harm than good. One could argue that, to avoid such problems, the NGO should only take in 'perfect' volunteers who had no experience with for example drugs or alcohol. Given the particular background of the volunteers, and the nature of just being young and curious, however, this is an unrealistic expectation. The Manager emphasised that it was problematic if volunteers were giving out double messages, which is why the NGO wants to work with the personal development of the volunteers as well. He said that the aim of the NGO was to empower young people, including their own volunteers. Linda, the administrative volunteer, supported this way of thinking and explained how the process can and does operate for some volunteers:

"They work alongside the current volunteers before they get responsibilities. With the training and the personal development, their life starts changing and they realise it is not good to tell young people not to do wrong things like smoking drugs or drinking and things like that but then you do it yourself. Nobody forces the volunteers to change, it's their choice to change, and they choose to become better people basically" (Interview with Linda 15.06.2004).

I will come back to issues such as changes and personal development on the part of the volunteers in chapter 4, Motivations for Volunteering.

In order to improve the process of recruiting new volunteers and taking care of them, the Manager is looking for a person whom the volunteers can trust and respect. The NGO is thus continuing to look for somebody who would be responsible for the volunteers and who would be recruiting and interviewing candidates. The Manager also wants this person to be involved in training the volunteers on a monthly basis.

At present, Sue, an older and more experienced volunteer is doing part of what this position includes, for example, conducting some of the training of the volunteers. Having her in this position does have some advantages but, according to the questionnaires, only 1 volunteer out of 11 rated the co-operation with Sue to be better



than 3 (neutral). The questionnaires, as well as my observations and interviews, clearly indicate that the volunteers themselves want a person whose main occupation would be to take care of all volunteer related issues. The NGO is not likely to receive additional money to spend on stipends for the volunteers, so it must do whatever it can to make the volunteers feel needed, cared for and important to the NGO: a person in the described position could ensure that this is the case.

## Remuneration

In order for volunteers to remain in an organisation, they will have to get something out of it, whether it is something tangible like money, or something more intangible such as personal fulfilment. In this paragraph, I will describe one form of reward received by the NGO's volunteers: stipends. Nine of the 11 volunteers I have interviewed have received stipends from the NGO. These are usually given on a monthly basis, but only when money is available. The last months from February to June 2004 have been very stable. According to the questionnaire, volunteers receive stipends of between R300 and R2400 per month; depending on how long they have been in the NGO and what their responsibilities are. None of the volunteers earns any money other than what they receive from the NGO. The stipends are distributed as follows:

Table1. The Stipends<sup>14</sup>

R0:	R300:	R1100:	R1500:	R2400:
1	3	5	1	1
volunteer	volunteers	volunteers	volunteer	volunteer

Money is not a major motivation for the volunteers according to their answers regarding why they want to become a volunteer. Only two persons admitted that earning money was a motivational factor for them, but, interestingly, these were not the ones receiving the highest amounts. The new volunteers receive the least amount

<sup>14</sup> In order to contextualise these amounts: 3.4 % of the employed people in this area on the Cape Flats earn between R1 and R400 a month, 7.2% earn between R401 and R800, 32% earn from R801 to R1600, 38% earn from R1601 to R3200, 14.7% earn between R3201 and R6400, and 0.001% earn R20480 or more. This information was attached to an email from Tracy Daniels, Information Officer, Statistics South Africa, Western Cape 13.09.2004.

of money. The more experienced volunteers and the core facilitators receive the middle amount (R1100). The one who receives R1500 is the part-time administration volunteer. Why does she receive R400 more than the core facilitator does, when she works part-time and they work full-time? My understanding of this is that she has a more responsible job in the sense that she is the only one doing what she does, and she works more effectively. This statement is based on long-term participant observation in the NGO office. Although the volunteers spend much time in the office, they are not really working all the time. Very few people work effectively throughout the entire day, and some achieve more than others. Steve, who earns R2400, has been working for the NGO since 1997 and works 8½ hour per day, which explains why he gets more than the other volunteers do. One could discuss how much money a volunteer can get before she or he must be counted as staff, but I do not challenge the NGO's decisions in this case. The members of staff do, after all, earn sufficiently more than the volunteers, the volunteers' stipends are not as regular as the staff's salaries, and the NGO itself calls the persons volunteers.

Going abroad is a very special dream of many young people, and that includes the volunteers in the NGO. The Manager and three volunteers went to Europe last year, on a tour sponsored mainly by the host. The Manager decided who could go with him. He said it had been very difficult to choose, but Andy, William and Elisabeth who were selected, were all hard-working and committed and had been in the NGO for a while (Elisabeth is not active in the NGO anymore but stays in touch and does some training with the Manager).

The Manager also spends some time with some of the volunteers after hours. I am not sure if this is a reward, but I have seen the volunteers enjoy this very much. Of the volunteers, only the young men (especially Andy and William), are sometimes doing various tasks for the Manager. To be taken out fishing might also be seen as a reward. When I went fishing with the Manager, Andy, William and some other volunteers, I saw the Manager as the leader, but the group spoke and acted more like friends than Manager and volunteers. It was a very good atmosphere. Everyone caught a fish, and they were joking and laughing. The Manager, Andy and William are members of the same sports club. I thus do not see this kind of interaction as a reward, but rather as sharing the same interests.

The Manager expressed the wish that the young female volunteers would also have a role model in the NGO, and someone they could bond with and spend time with after hours. Although he does not expect it, he does seem to wish that the female staff could do more in these terms.<sup>15</sup> By the female staff, he means Linda and another volunteer, Sue. My observations, the questionnaire and the interviews do, however, indicate that the female volunteers would not have enjoyed this type of relationship with the female staff as much as the males enjoy it with the Manager. Elisabeth, who went abroad, seems to be more suited for such relationships with the female volunteers. She is close friends with some of them, and seems to interact easily with the other volunteers. Effectively, the Manager would like to see her in a position of being responsible for the volunteers.

### **Contracts**

There seems to be some confusion amongst the volunteers with regard to the forms they fill in: They do not know whether they are membership forms or contracts. If they do have a contract, they are unsure whether it is an NGO contract or a Love Life contract (Love Life is an HIV/AIDS campaign in which some of the volunteers are involved). The answers given in response to the questionnaire regarding contracts reveals that none of the volunteers has an NGO contract except two of them, although they do not know if they actually have a contract. This is even more interesting because seven volunteers said that it was either important or very important to have a contract. Of the remaining five, four expressed a neutral attitude towards contracts, whilst only one said that it was not important to have a contract at all. In my opinion, there are some advantages to having a written contract between the NGO and the volunteers. Firstly, both parties will know what they can expect from each other, which would definitely reduce conflicts relating to what the volunteers are supposed to do. Another advantage is that a contract provides greater security for the volunteers, and gives their role a sense of formality. A disadvantage, though, is that the NGO is in many ways a very informal organisation. Its hierarchy and culture are clear but not rigidly spelt out. A contract might thus create a stricter and more formalised NGO than both management and volunteers would like.

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<sup>15</sup> Information from the Manager in this section: Interview with the Manager 22.06.2004.

## **Policy and Membership**

The NGO is founded on a Christian basis, and clearly addresses principles such as working for equal opportunities and justice for all.<sup>16</sup> Although the volunteers are expected to support the NGO policy, they do not evangelise; thus, even if they did wish their members to be Christian, this is not expected or demanded. The NGO serves a multicultural community and so the NGO wants to be open to all people. Anyone can be a member or a volunteer, but to be given permission to vote at the annual meeting, one must sign a 'part 2' on the membership form stating that one believes that Christ is the saviour. All but one of the volunteers who filled in the questionnaires in this study stated that they were in fact Christians. It is unknown to me if they have signed the 'Part 2'.

The various services provided by the NGO address the basic human needs of young people, adults and society in general. The NGO focuses on community development and capacity building. This means that it tries to design and implement programmes that the community wants, rather than using a top-down approach. This way of working also means that it is more likely that the projects will be sustainable. Projects are thus a response to what members of the community view as challenges, and members of the community do the work. Due to the experience the NGO has gained through the years and the well-established co-operation with schools in the area, the NGO believes that appropriate preventative work can be done to give children better opportunities to choose a better future. The personnel strongly believe in preventative work and aim to empower children so that they will not become or remain victims of their social and economically disadvantaged background.<sup>17</sup>

## **Programmes & Activities**

"The services of the NGO are curative, preventative and developmental based. Over the last few years, the NGO's care has come to the fore through its drop-

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<sup>16</sup> This comes from the NGO's Mission Statement.

<sup>17</sup> This information is taken from funding proposals and conversations with Steve and the Manager.

in centre for people living on the street, programme focusing on child abuse and neglect, HIV/AIDS at primary and high schools, Youth Leadership Training, HIV pre- and post-test counselling, after-school activities such as youth clubs, arts and crafts, sport codes, as well as to assist institutions to set up programme/projects and arranging camps for children and youth. During the years that the NGO has been working on the Cape Flats, good relationships with schools have been developed. We are involved in 10 high schools and 16 of the Cape Flats primary schools.”<sup>18</sup>

The NGO is very active in the community and arranges events on Youth Day, AIDS Day, Valentine’s Day and other special days. It has been involved in work at prisons and places of safety, and it runs after-school clubs and holiday clubs. It also runs four long-term programmes, namely HIV/AIDS Counselling, Love Life, Better Life Options, and the Life Skills Programme. The last programme is the one that this dissertation focuses on. This will be developed in more detail after a brief presentation of the three other main programmes in which the volunteers are involved:

### **HIV/AIDS Counselling**

HIV/AIDS is having a serious impact on the entire African continent and in South Africa, approximately 20% of the population is infected with HIV (UNAIDS 2004). The NGO has three female volunteers who serve as HIV/AIDS counsellors at different health clinics in the community. They do pre- and post-HIV test counselling, mainly among young females and mothers.

### **Love Life**

There are many ongoing projects in the battle against AIDS, some curative, some preventative, and Love Life is one of these. Love Life is South Africa’s national preventative campaign regarding HIV/AIDS. Through education and activities, Love Life’s objective is to decrease the number of young people infected with HIV by 2010. The NGO is a Love Life franchise, meaning that the volunteers are trained by Love Life, to be so called groundbreakers, and for one year they carry out Love Life activities, but are still promoting the NGO at the same time. Love Life volunteers are

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<sup>18</sup> This is how the NGO presents itself in various funding proposals so I am paraphrasing several.

not trained by Love Life, but are helping groundbreakers with their programmes. The NGO has been involved in Love Life debating programmes, sport codes such as sailing and basketball, and positive sexuality.<sup>19</sup> The NGO is a Christian organisation and its recommendation regarding sex is for the youth to abstain until they are married. Some people in the NGO and at the NGO's national office view Love Life, in contrast, as promoting sex before marriage. This conflict however, does not seem to create any practical problems in the NGO. The decision has been taken that they are a Love Life franchise and this is accepted. The Manager in this regard explained that the best method of protection against the disease is to abstain from sex, but for those who do not, it is very important that they use condoms. He does not agree with those who say that Love Life is promoting promiscuity and sex before marriage when they are promoting the use of condoms and gives advice to young people regarding sex. I do not know the amount of money the NGO receives from Love Life, but it is clearly one of the main reasons why the NGO is involved with this campaign.<sup>20</sup>

### **Better Life Options**

The third programme is the Better Life Options (BLO) programme, which is targeted at high school learners. It covers many of the same topics as Love Life, but is solely the NGO's programme. If they had enough funding, they would do only this and not Love Life as well. The volunteers (and the staff when they are arranging camps) train peer-educators who go back to their schools and their classes and hold sessions with their peers on topics such as sex and sexuality, gender, drugs and alcohol, and HIV/AIDS.

The last programme is the Life Skills programme, which the volunteers interviewed for this dissertation are involved in. I will now give a more detailed presentation of the Life Skills programme, as it gives important background information and allows us to gain a better understanding of the volunteers I have interviewed.

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<sup>19</sup> For more information regarding love Life, see [www.lovelife.org.za](http://www.lovelife.org.za)

<sup>20</sup> The Manager, personal communication, undated.

### The Life Skills Programme

The NGO has been implementing its Life Skills programmes (LS) in primary schools since 1997; Life Skills was the first programme to be implemented when the NGO was established that same year. The first Life Skills manual was taken over from another organisation and served as an inspiration when the NGO started its own Life Skills programme. The twin purposes of the LS approach to education are more self-empowerment for people and more empowering systems in which to live, work and play (Hopson and Scaly 1985: 23). The slogan is "Life Skills: Taking charge of yourself and your life" (ibid: 4). The NGO has not adopted this manual and the present Life Skills programme is not grounded in a certain model of community development or in any specific theory. Instead, it is based on experimental learning from the NGO's own practical experience through their work with children in the community. Dawes and Louw (2000) have drafted a model for understanding the reasons for anti-social behaviour. The NGO approves of this model regarding the children they work with in the Life Skills programme.

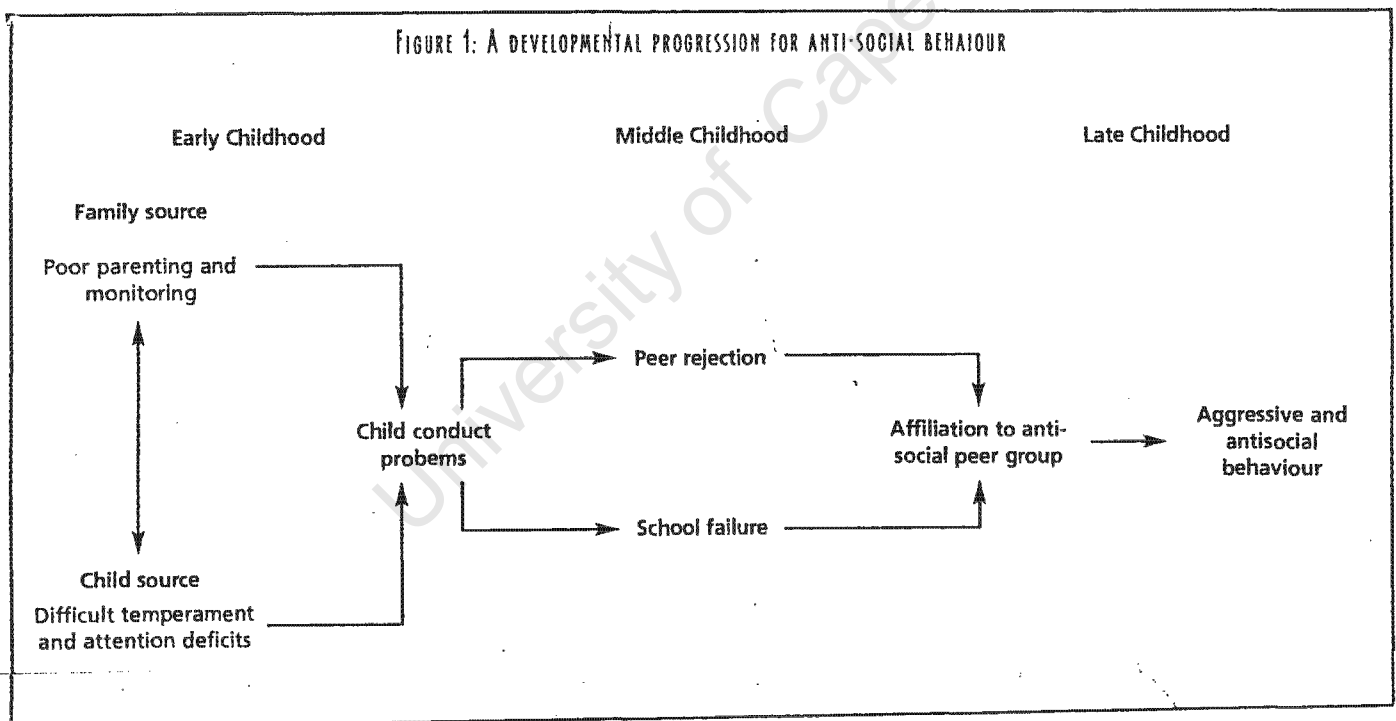


Figure 7. Understanding reasons for anti social behaviour (Dawes & Louw 2000: 97)

The first phase of the 2004 LS programme ran from March until August. If the internal evaluation due by June 2004 shows satisfactory results, it will continue in 2005. Volunteers from the NGO conducted LS sessions during school hours, once a week in each class. The value of the Life Skills sessions taking place in the children's classroom rather than separate from school is that they create the feeling that school is something fun and interesting, which is intended to prevent a high drop-out rate. The NGO says it is very important for young people to feel loved and cared for and to feel they belong somewhere. They believe the school should be such a place. The sessions are adjusted to the different needs of the various schools, and for this year's programme, there were 12 sessions covering the following topics:

- Self Image
- Problem Solving and Goal Setting
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution/Mediation
- Sex and Sexuality
- Assertiveness
- HIV/AIDS/Gender
- Substance Abuse
- Creative Expression.

The 2004 LS 'crew' is all volunteers; the group consists of the programme manager, 6 core facilitators and 6 volunteers in a clear hierarchy. Due to his position as the person in charge of the NGO, the NGO Manager is also responsible for the programme but he does not interfere much in it.

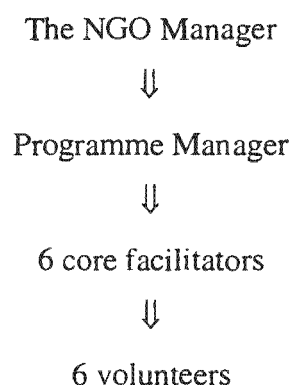


Figure 8. The hierarchy in the Life Skills programme.



The core facilitators are responsible for actually conducting the Life Skills sessions in the schools. Sessions are presented in class for one period once a week, usually with the class teacher being present. Since school is compulsory, these sessions have a very high attendance rate, and many of the children actually look forward to the sessions. The structure is the same for every session:

1. Ice breaker
2. Presentation of the topic
3. Role play, a story, group/individual activity to get a better understanding of the topic
4. Discussion and presentation from the activity
5. Closure with a song and/or a game

The 2 female and 4 male core facilitators (aged 20-27) have all done LS and/or other programmes for the NGO already. They emphasise participation from the children, as they believe their messages are more likely to have an impact if the children are not only passive recipients of information during the sessions. In addition, the core facilitators and the volunteers are all familiar with the structure at the various schools, they know many of the children and they seem to be very popular amongst the children:

“The school erupts when I come” and “they give me flowers and fruit.”

(Interview with Andy 10.09.04 and personal communication with Maria, undated).

The six volunteers work with and assist the core facilitators. The Life Skills crew is enthusiastic about the programme, and it is an ambitious one. One objective is “to contribute to the process of social change by identifying, understanding and recommending an action plan to address the causes of underdevelopment.” In May 2004 I made an evaluation plan for this programme, where I, on behalf of the NGO, formulated other objectives for the programme to be as follows:

- 2000 children, including 120 children identified as manifesting 'problem behaviour', have participated in 12 sessions in the NGO's Life Skills programme, by 20.06.2004.
- Children are exposed to committed young volunteers from their own community, whom they can view as positive role models.
- Children are educated in alternative ways of behaving and are able to behave less 'problematically' in school.

### **The Need for the Life Skills Programme**

The NGO is a member of Cape Flats Development Forum, which declares, "A need exists for the socio-economic development of our people on the Cape Flats through the re-construction and development programme" (Cape Flats Development Forum 2002). The NGO wanted to contribute to this by means of its Life Skills programme. It is targeted at children in grades 4-6, and the goal of the programme is to decrease the number of children exhibiting problem behaviour in school. The Western Province Minister of Education, André Gaum (2002), has stated that more than 50% of the children on the Cape Flats come from single parent families. Children are thus left without supervision after school and in many cases pre-school children are left in the care of older girl siblings, who themselves should be at school. The incidence of physical and sexual abuse is becoming more prevalent. The abuse of alcohol and drugs has a significant impact too. In general, children are exposed to poor role models within their immediate and extended families. Becoming a member of a gang therefore fills the void and provides for the needs of developing young lives, while fulfilling needs, such as feeling protected and a sense of belonging. The rationale for a preventative project like Life Skills is that, if there are fewer children outside the schooling system, there will be fewer recruits for gangs (Gaum 2002). The NGO wants to give children a sense of hope and to make them feel that they are special and cared for and, in that way, to contribute to keeping children in school.

The funder of the programme (a combined governmental, provincial and city fund for urban development) wanted to implement a comprehensive programme for learners who exhibit 'problem behaviour'. The funding, R145 000 plus an additional R50 000 for the camps, was enough to cover six schools. The LS crew and the schools

identified 20 children exhibiting 'problem behaviour' at each of the six of the schools and invited them to participate in a Life Skills camp. In addition to this, the NGO decided not only to work with children exhibiting 'problem behaviour', but also to let all the children in grades 4-6 participate in the programme. This effectively means that the programme is reaching approximately 2000 children. According to an information meeting for the schools involved in the LS programme, 20 children from each school would be just a drop in the ocean, so the participation of all the children was warmly welcomed. On an alarming note, one of the attendants said, "We had a fight between two of our children, where one of them died."<sup>21</sup> This is an extreme case of 'problem behaviour', but it also illustrates the fact that many children in the area are facing hard conditions growing up. The NGO says that the results of a pre-test the NGO conducted in March 2004 showed that many of the children were being asked by gangs to join them, and were experiencing peer-pressure and different types of abuse. The premise of the LS programme is that children will make better choices if they are supported in their personal development and if this support is closely related to their own experiences. The programme manager pointed out that some of the children were making bad choices because they did not feel cared for or loved, and because they were "feeling less than." By this he means:

"If you are from a place like this and your mom is an alcoholic; the attitude is that the child will be an alcoholic as well. Or if your brother is a gangster, you must be a gangster." (Interview with Steve 22.03.2004)

The NGO wants to help the children move away from this mindset to one that is more empowering:

"It doesn't matter where you are from, if you work and have the potential, you will get there" (Interview with Steve 22.03.2004).

The NGO wants to give the children a sense of hope so that they will be empowered and encouraged to move beyond their own limits. One reason for elaborating on this programme is that the Life Skills volunteers and core facilitators I have interviewed

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<sup>21</sup> Information meeting for the schools on 22.04.2004.

have all 'moved beyond their own borders', come from the same background and have experienced the same difficulties as the children with whom they are working. For instance:

- 7 of the 11 volunteers interviewed said that they used to drink heavily;
- 6 of them admitted that they had previously been using drugs;
- 4 of them (all males) had been involved in gang-related activities;
- 3 of them had been seriously injured, or had been with good friends who were killed in fights.

In the questionnaire, they were asked to think back to when they were the same age as the children in the LS programme, i.e. in grades 4-6. All of them said that they had experienced one or more of the following:

- they did not get enough attention from caregivers;
- caregivers were misusing alcohol or drugs;
- they felt unsafe;
- gangsters threatened them;
- they had low self-esteem;
- they did not have good role models; and/or
- they lived in homes where the caregivers were violent to each other.

This is not intended to criticize the volunteers' families or their childhoods, but rather to illustrate the similarity between the volunteers and the children with whom they are working. Despite the various negative things the volunteers have experienced, they also reported many positive situations and times of happiness from their childhood. This is, in fact, one of their tasks when working in the programme, viz. to focus on what is positive and thereby to empower the children.

How do the volunteers learn this, and what other skills are required from them? The core facilitators have been chosen because of their facilitation skills, but they had also been trained before implementing the 2004 Life Skills programme. The NGO believes in skills development through training but also through 'learning by doing'. Several of the volunteers reported that they were 'thrown in at the deep end' without preparation:

“When I went to the school they just told me: ‘you are gonna do this, do the session’ and I never had any training, I never had a manual, and I just had to do the session” (Interview with Maria 14.06.2004).

Maria added that she felt she had managed quite well, and she agreed to my idea that the NGO would probably not have done it if it did not think she could handle it. Martha in her interview (20.06.2004) recounted a similar experience from a training session:

“I was *scared* because I was very shy at that time and I didn’t feel that I could *speak* in front of these people and stuff... and ah, my first session that I did was STI’s [sexually transmitted infections] and I was *shaking* a hell of a lot! It was terrible and I’m telling you for me it was the worst experience *ever* because I didn’t prepare myself for this and I didn’t know what I was getting myself into (...) after that session, I didn’t do that well, but I *knew* that I had the potential in me.”

Fortunately, even though the programme did not start easily for these two volunteers, they did realise that they love to facilitate.

In my opinion, however, it is not enough to care about children in order to do a good job – especially not when working with children who exhibit ‘problem behaviour’. There are certain skills one should have, and thus the volunteers did participate in at least two training sessions for the Life Skills programme. However, according to the questionnaires, interviews and personal communication, the majority of the volunteers did not find the training and the manual to be entirely appropriate for the work that they were going to do with the children showing ‘problem behaviour’. Nonetheless, the volunteers are very, very passionate, committed and skilful in their job. Lee (interviewed 21.06.2004) replied as follows when I asked about the skills necessary for doing their job:

“It’s to be a people’s person, you have to be confident in what you’re doing, you have to be able to have that, that eye contact man and have to be able to come down to the level of the young people or the child that you’re working with and yea, you’re just supposed to be out there and you are supposed to set an example before you can say ‘I need you guys to live a positive life style’, you need to show them what it is to live a positive lifestyle, so that is basically the skills that is required.”

The programme manager has not explicitly told me about any specific skills that the volunteers need. I did find, though, that the focus of the training must be on how to facilitate, not only on what to facilitate. The training session I observed (21.04.2004) dealt with both. I agree with Lee’s assessment of the skills needed by the volunteers to work in the schools. Nevertheless, I would like to add the importance of being trustworthy, fair, consequential, and to be able to protect yourself from being drained and physically hurt. This does not mean to be able to fight but to be ‘one step ahead’ and thus to prevent negative situations that can be hard to control. It is also crucial to have the skill of catching the children’s attention, keeping it and diverting the attention away from negative behaviour. As Martha (ibid) said, many of these skills are learnt through practising.

On a more personal note, writing a thesis such as this one also requires practice. It involved much trial and error in choosing the topic, carrying out the fieldwork, designing the questionnaire, conducting the interviews, organising, analysing and writing up all the information. These and other related issues will be discussed in the next chapter on methodology.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

“Nobody’s perfect, especially a researcher hot on the trail of a finding”  
(Babbie et.al 2001: 413).

In this chapter I will discuss the methods used for data collection in this study, but first I will present a number of ethical considerations.

#### **Ethical Considerations**

This section draws heavily on the work of Babbie & Mouton (2001)

#### **The Politics of Social Research**

South African policy documents call for the scientific community to mobilize their resources in the service of the new national social and economic goals. Scientists of all persuasions are thus called on to make a contribution to the reconstruction and development of the new society (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 535). Science should be autonomous although I do understand the government’s need for research in social science to be more effective in planning and implement programmes needed by the people. I feel that my study meets this call from the government, as improved knowledge of what motivates volunteers can have a positive impact on recruiting and retaining volunteers and creating positive role models in the local communities.

#### **Who, if Anyone, benefits from this Study?**

Social research, such as this study, often requires people to reveal personal information about themselves. In fact, this study could not have been done without the volunteers’ generosity in sharing their stories. This study may, after all, contain information that neither the volunteers’ friends and families nor the staff in the NGO may know about, and this information is revealed to strangers, i.e. the readers of this

thesis, too. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 520) may be right in saying that people volunteer for research purposes because of their belief that they will benefit personally from their cooperation. They further argue, however, that social research can seldom contribute to this, other than that it may ultimately help all of humanity. My study is thus an attempt to give the NGO information about what motivates its volunteers, so that it can accommodate their needs in the best possible way. If they do so, the volunteers are more likely to remain in the NGO for longer, more people might choose to become volunteers, and this is likely to have a positive impact on the society within which the NGO operates. Simply put, I hope that other NGOs will also take notice of what applies to them in this study and use it in working with their volunteers. After the various interviews with the volunteers in my study, the majority expressed the view that it had been a positive experience for them, as illustrated by Lee (21.06.2004):

“The things you’re doing now, is actually inspiring for me. Meaning that ahm, it’s cool because it’s like, like you’re interested in what I have to say about myself or you are interested yea, you’re interested in *us*.”

### **Bring No Harm to the People under Study**

I am not sure how to ensure that none of the volunteers who participated in this research are harmed in any way, as my study may indeed have consequences that are beyond my understanding or control. To try to limit any harm to the volunteers, I have explained to them thoroughly about how I will use what they have said. When using quotations that contain sensitive information, I have thought about the possible reactions of the volunteers, and I have tried to find settings where this type of information has been revealed to others too. For example, one of the volunteers said during a camp that “fighting as problem solving did not really work.” He spoke about his experiences in this regard; explaining that he had been stabbed in a fight and had been hospitalized. This led me to the conclusion that it would be acceptable to him if I quoted him directly. As another example, a few volunteers told me that they had been arrested before, but in this case I did not ask whether they were guilty as charged or what they had done. This is because I assumed that this knowledge would not reveal more information with regard to why they were volunteering. The risk associated with



probing further in this situation seemed high, as I felt the relationship I had with the volunteers was one where they would feel they should not hold anything back if I asked. I felt that my own curiosity was a stronger motive for probing than the actual need for the information, and so I never asked further questions.

As Babbie and Mouton argue (2001: 522), certain past behaviour may appear to be unjust or immoral, and personal concerns may last long after the research has been completed and published. For example, probing questions may injure a person's fragile self-esteem. One can argue that I would have gained a more complete picture of the volunteers if I had done more probing of deviant behaviour, but it did not feel right, as my topic was limited to understanding motivations for volunteering, and not deviant behaviour. However, their deviant past behaviour did sometimes play a role in motivating them to volunteer, and those who had participated in and spoken about past deviant behaviour did use their personal experiences when working with the children. Because of this connection, I felt comfortable in probing some of their statements. At the same time, I tried to maintain a fine balance between my desire for information and the volunteer's desire for confidentiality. I think the latter should receive priority, and I did not want the volunteers to read things in this dissertation that might make them feel bad about having confided in me. After all, although they are not identified by their real names, they will recognise what they have said to me.

### **Confidentiality**

As I personally interviewed all the volunteers and the Manager of the NGO, I can identify every response of the interviewees, which means that they are not in fact anonymous. However, I have tried my best to keep information about the NGO, the volunteers and the Manager confidential. This means that, although I can identify a given person's response, I essentially promise not to do so publicly (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 522). As soon as the interviews and questionnaires had been conducted, I deleted all information of the NGO's location and the real names of the volunteers and the people they mentioned, and replaced these with pseudonyms.

Nonetheless, despite the steps taken, I cannot guard against all possible injuries that this study and I may cause the volunteers, but I hope that I have caused as little harm as possible by being sensitive to their needs.

### **The Choice of Topic**

The volunteers working for the NGO were not my original choice of topic. Originally, I had intended to examine the Life Skills programme that the volunteers were running for children in primary school, including 120 children with so-called 'problem behaviour'. I wanted to find out how the programme had influenced the children who participated in it, and how it did so. The volunteers had also caught my attention at that stage, and I wanted to find out what the NGO meant to them and why they had become volunteers in the first place. In retrospect, I realise that my original topic was far too unfocused. Even though I had made contact with the NGO at an early stage, there would never have been enough time or resources to find out everything I needed for my original topic.

Consequently, while I was waiting for the NGO to give me the information I needed about the Life Skills programme and everything related to it, I was doing the coursework component of the degree for which I was registered. At the time, I thought that it was unfortunate that this information never arrived, but it forced me to change and sharpen my focus. When a supervisor was finally appointed for me, he commented on the lack of clarity in my proposal and asked me to choose only one of the topics mentioned above. The fact that I was already familiar with the NGO, that I had established a good relationship with the volunteers, that the volunteers were available and that time was starting to run out, convinced me to focus exclusively on the volunteers. Ultimately, with the benefit of hindsight, I am very glad that I did so. Not only have I gained valuable experience and knowledge in a new field, but I have realised that volunteers are very important in NGOs, which in turn play an important role in social development. The fact that many of the volunteers told me that they appreciated my work because they felt that I was taking them seriously, further confirms that I had ultimately chosen the right topic for this dissertation.

## Language

As the NGO uses English as its official language, it is used in proposals, training manuals, minutes and reports. Consequently, the informants and I used English, which is our second language. Not surprisingly, using one's second language creates a number of difficulties, translating from the informant's first language to English and my translation from Norwegian to English. For me it would have been difficult and very time consuming to learn their first language. Thus, even though we both faced problems of consistency and translation, English was a language we both knew, and therefore, the natural choice. If it was needed, e.g. at a political meeting, my informants translated from the local language. Whenever I was present, people usually spoke English. As time went on, I gained a brief understanding of some conversations in their language, and I learnt the most important greetings and slang used by the volunteers. The use of an interpreter was met by negativity among some of the volunteers. The reasons for this seemed to be that they meant we would understand each other in English and I assume that some of them were reluctant to disclose personal information to strangers. In one situation, for instance, a volunteer asked me specifically not to bring an interpreter because of the personal nature of the conversations between us. However, other volunteers were positive about letting an interpreter come to the interview. On another occasion a good friend of mine assisted as an interpreter, and the interviewee said that he was, and indeed seemed to be, comfortable with this. On a further occasion, an interpreter unfortunately had to cancel an hour before an interview with an informant who felt more comfortable speaking his first language rather than English. For various reasons, this interview could not be postponed. Nevertheless, I did gain useful information. Obviously, I would have learned even more, if I spoke the local language or if I had an interpreter. Having said this, it was an advantage that I had been with the NGO for 8-9 months before the interviews actually took place. Using Kvale's words, who is the author of *"Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing"*, this is good as:

"Just hanging out in the environment where the interviews are to be conducted will give an introduction to the local language, the daily routines, and the power structures, and so provide a sense of what the interviewees will be talking about" (1996: 96).

## The NGO and I

Although I do not have a complete overview of volunteer research in the world, it seems that studies of volunteer's motivations are not rare. Studies of volunteers who are born in and who volunteer in disadvantaged communities or high-risk communities (Cole 2004), however, are rare. As I explained in my introduction, I had minimal knowledge about the Cape Flats when I first arrived in Cape Town in July 2003. After completing the university course that introduced me to the NGO, I asked the Manager if I could continue doing my fieldwork at the NGO. He was very happy to agree to my request, and later informed the staff and volunteers about his decision. As far as I am aware, nobody expressed a negative response to this new phase of my presence. I was included in some of the staff's tasks, especially those that were of interest to me. In many cases, I was also seen as a resource: I was regularly asked to attend meetings and gatherings of the NGO in the community, meetings regarding the Life Skills programme and training of the volunteers. I sometimes felt that the NGO liked to show that they had someone who was not from the Cape Flats, who was a UCT student and who was using the NGO as her field study. On two occasions, I was spontaneously asked to present a topic or to give my opinion in a formal meeting, without being given any advance notice. From time to time, I was also asked to help with proposals and reports, as well as sessions and team building activities on camps. When it came to the more physical activities, I joined working days at the new location as well as attending soccer practices and tournaments. The volunteers, with whom I spent much time, often asked my advice about computers and report writing. They always responded positively to my requests to join them in specific activities, and they often invited me along to a variety of sessions, meetings, camps and lunches.<sup>22</sup> They were very open and interested in me and in life in Norway. We did not spend time together after working hours, though, when it had nothing to do with the NGO, except once, when we went clubbing.<sup>23</sup> Although it took some time before I felt included, I felt from the very first day that my presence was welcomed.

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<sup>22</sup> From time to time, we filled my car with waste paper from the office and took it to the local recycling point. The money we received for this was spent on family packets of chips and rolls.

<sup>23</sup> On this occasion, we did not go to a local club but rather to one in a more upmarket area. It may be wrong to say that this had no connection to the NGO, as another volunteer picked us up at night, in the Manager's car and took us home afterwards.

My key informants were first of all Steve and the Manager as well as a group of 4 volunteers. Other informants were general members of staff, volunteers in other programmes and the 6 other volunteers I interviewed. They were all interested in my study and appreciated my interest in the NGO, the Life Skills programme and the volunteers. They were also of key importance in helping me to see more of the Cape Flats so that I could understand better 'where they were coming from', and they also helped me to get in touch with other NGO's and volunteers. Steve especially was very helpful in providing me with the documentation for various projects and with background information about the NGO. Linda was also very helpful in getting things done and assisted me when other people had forgotten things I had asked about. I do not know how many days or hours I spent at the NGO in total, but for about 3 months, I was frequently and intensively at the NGO for the purpose of this study.

The methods used in this study were observation, questionnaire based survey, social network mapping and interviews. Before discussing these methods and why I chose them, it is necessary to look at qualitative research

## **Characteristics of Qualitative Studies in General and this Study in Particular**

This dissertation is a qualitative study, whose objective it is to find out why a group of young people is working as full-time volunteers for an NGO in their community. As I had little experience in doing research, I signed up for a course in Interdisciplinary Research Methods at the University of Cape Town, which I found very useful. The negative associations attached to qualitative methods are many and I wanted to learn more about this method of research because I disagree with statements such as the following:

"Qualitative research is what nurses do. Or, perhaps what GPs do before they have been taught how to do research properly. Qualitative research is un-rigorous, 'touchy-feely' and amateur, depending as it does on techniques such

as participant observation (hanging around pretending you are part of the team), semi-structured interviews (letting the subject ramble on rather than answer the question), and focus groups (encouraging aimless chit-chat over cups of coffee). Qualitative research is quick, dirty, and could be undertaken by anyone in a 'hierarchy of evidence', which has meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials at the top, qualitative research belong at the bottom" (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/openlearning/uebpp/b4.htm> in de Wet and Erasmus 2003).

I agree with de Wet and Erasmus (2003) that qualitative methods and data analysis can and should be systematic, procedural and rigorous. By applying these principles one avoids responding indiscriminately to the 'loudest bangs or brightest lights'.

My research took place in the natural setting of the study; on the Cape Flats, in the NGO, among a selected group of volunteers and other members of the NGO. It is important that the setting was approached from many angles. This is why I did not only sit in the office with the volunteers, but went along with them to a great variety of activities, from formal meetings to clubbing. By doing this, I could observe the volunteers in various settings and get to know their area. The aim of qualitative studies in general is to obtain 'thick descriptions', meaning that the researcher aims for detailed information regarding respondents' experiences, feelings, motivations, knowledge and reasoning. Such studies aim for depth and an interpretive understanding of the subject matter. This means that qualitative studies focus on describing and understanding, rather than on explaining human behaviour in a causal or positivistic fashion. For my part, studying people from another country and culture involved in full time volunteering was an activity which I had little theoretical knowledge about and it posed many interesting challenges.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, I have tried to understand the volunteer's actions and motivation in terms of the volunteer's own beliefs, history and context. The research strategy in qualitative studies is inductive and contextualising. Given the approach to the setting in qualitative studies, this strategy implies collecting information in such a way that events can be understood

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<sup>24</sup> A song by the Icelandic artist Bjork, often came to my mind: "if you ever get close to a human and human behaviour, you better be ready to get confused (...) there's no map and a compass wouldn't help at all" Available: <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/HUMAN-BEHAVIOUR-lyrics-Bjork/C04FF9DF5BF19A0A4825689C00259D75> [Accessed 21 January 2005].

and described in their natural setting. The researcher does not start with a hypothesis but begins by engaging with the subject of the research in his or her natural environment. When I approached the NGO and the volunteers, I did not have fully formulated and deductively developed research hypotheses, but merely a fascination for and interest in their work.

With regard to the notion of objectivity, there is a huge responsibility on the researcher to be unbiased in both descriptions and interpretations, as the qualitative researcher is the most important “instrument” in the research process (Babbie and Mouton 2001). The researcher can use several methods to increase the objectivity of the study, and consequently its transferability in the sense that the findings can be extrapolated to another similar situation, and credibility. For instance, I focused on various components, such as remaining in the field until I felt that I had gathered sufficient data, observing and consistently noting down observations as well as using triangulation to crosscheck and verify information.

Theoretically, this study has a grounded theory approach as per the understanding of Babbie and Mouton (2001). It can be categorised as an ethnographic study as it seeks to give information about the volunteer’s motivation from their point of view rather than attempting to develop a theory. As Strauss and Corbin put it: “... one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge” (quoted in Babbie and Mouton 2001: 498). The main methods used in an ethnographic study are interviewing and participant observation. As Babbie and Mouton (2001) argue, ethnography has lost its original link to cultural anthropology, as it has been taken up by many other social scientists.

To understand and describe something qualitatively implies using a broad methodological approach. This approach applies to data collection, analysis and interaction with research subjects. I have used several methods to collect a range of information with the ultimate aim of understanding why people become volunteers in the first place. Obviously, the size of this study is too small to allow us to generalise with regard to volunteers’ motivations, but useful findings can nonetheless be drawn from small-scale studies. In my view, it is important that the NGO finds the study useful and that other NGOs will do so too. The numerous collected data and the

Babbie and Mouton 2001: 275). Triangulation refers to the combination of multiple strategies and methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. The purpose is to provide the researcher with reliable and unbiased data by crosschecking the validity of the information. Triangulation is generally considered one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research. In this study, the data collecting methods were interviews, participatory observation, questionnaire and social network maps, all which will be elaborated on below. On a cautionary note, however, one must remember that information about people and their social environment is not static and that the study might need to be adjusted accordingly (ibid).

One of the limitations of my approach is that I could, however, have been more thorough by discussing the obtained information from the interviews with the volunteers and in terms of peer debriefing. This lapse in rigour came about because I was writing my thesis in Norway, where I was not registered at a university and I was living far away from peers who might have been able to play devil's advocate. Fortunately, by using email and calling the NGO from time to time, I was able to correct obvious errors and to clarify uncertain or missing data. A second limitation of my approach was that my field notes could have been more extensive to assure me that I had indeed gathered all the relevant data. Obviously, one would never gather 'all' such data, but, as I was inexperienced in this type of fieldwork, I was afraid I would not collect enough data. Only at a later stage did I realise that it was not the amount and quality of the material that was of prime importance, but what one does with it. A third limitation is that I could have been more thorough with the coding of the interviews. This is partly due to serious technical problems with the laptop I was working on and a late realisation of the advantages of coding. Nevertheless I feel that I got a good grasp of the interviews from transcribing all of them myself and reading them very thoroughly several times.



## Data Collection Methods

I have used numerous data collection methods to gain information for this study. These methods are interviews, conversations, questionnaires, social network maps, observation and field notes which will be presented shortly.

### The Interviews

As interviewing was one of my main methods of data collection, I will discuss this method at some length. It took much longer than expected to do the interviews, partly because of postponing for different reasons several times. Interviewing the volunteers turned out to be more draining than I had thought, so I sometimes needed a longer break between the interviews than I had planned. I learned that there is a long way to go from writing the interview schedule to coding the interview. I attempted to use in-depth interviewing, which is a more advanced and complex technique than the frequently used basic interview. In-depth interviewing places more emphasis on asking 'why' questions to understand how the respondent's arguments came into being (Babbie et al 2001), whereas basic interviews do not stress this to the same extent. My entire study was centred around the question "Why are you volunteering?" Accordingly, in-depth interviews were the most useful for my purposes.

The interviews relied on the methods described in the work of Kvale, "*An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*" (1996) and Wengraf, "*Qualitative Research Interviewing*" (2001). Kvale and Wengraf write that interviews need to be prepared for in advance, meaning that one needs a clear interview guideline and the ability to improvise and probe as the interview goes on.

"The very openness and flexibility of the interview (...) put strong demands on advance preparation and interviewer competence" (Kvale 1996: 84).

Rubin and Rubin (in Babbie et al 2001: 289) characterise the qualitative interview as "flexible, iterative, and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone." The nature of qualitative research implies that questioning will be re-designed throughout the project. Although I agree with this in part, it also makes no sense to me

that being prepared should lead to being 'locked in a stone'. Maybe Rubin is talking about the extreme, but my personal experience is that being prepared in fact gives room for more flexibility and spontaneity. For my interview guide see Appendix 3. Due to the nature of qualitative research, each interview will be different. As a researcher, one must therefore be flexible and spontaneous as well as structured. I found Wengraf's work helpful in this matter so I have applied Wengraf's (2001: 63) style of designing a central research question, theory questions and interview interventions, also known as an algorithm, to my research. (See Appendix 4).

### **Selection of Interviewees**

I selected a group of 12 interviewees. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 287), as a general rule of thumb, a South African Master's level study in the interpretive paradigm should have between 5 and 25 respondents. This is mainly due to time limitations on the study (the exact number depending on the depth of the study, the availability of suitable respondents, the resources, etc.). The number of respondents selected for this research was 10 volunteers from the same programme in the NGO, one administrative volunteer and the Manager of the NGO. They were all accessible, and I felt that, in the months before actually commencing my field study, we had developed a type of relationship that would be appropriate for an interview situation: we were neither strangers nor close friends.

### **The Interview Process**

"The absence of prescribed sets of rules creates an open-ended field of opportunity for the interviewer's skills, knowledge and intuition. Interviewing is a craft that is closer to art than standardized social science methods. The common term *unstandardized* may pertain to the interview situation, but an entire interview investigation tends to be a rather standardized affair" (Kvale 1996: 80, italics original).

My preparation for and standardizing of the interviews consisted of the following process: I conducted a pilot interview with one of the volunteers and transcribed the interview. This transcription was read and commented on by a professor. From the

professor's comments it was clear that the interview schedules needed to be improved dramatically. I accordingly sharpened the interview guide and learned more about how to ask probing and clear questions.

The next step was to discuss my research with the interviewees. I originally wanted to talk to them at the same time, firstly to ensure that they all received the same information, and secondly to save time. This did not work out as planned, though, as they were never all together at the same time, and it was impossible to arrange a time when all of us could meet. The interviewees also varied with regard to punctuality and keeping appointments. This might have been because it was also a very busy period in the NGO when I wanted to interview them. Finally, I prepared a calendar for 'interview time', which showed them what times they could choose. Appointments were thus made (and changed) whenever I saw them. These practical difficulties were exacerbated by a lack of appropriate space for the volunteers in the office, their working schedule at the schools and the absence of an organisational culture for gathering all the members or groups of members. The procedure I thus wanted to follow was to do one interview at a time, to transcribe it and to have it read by my supervisor. This proved to be impracticable and did not go as planned. I ended up transcribing the majority of the interviews when I was back in Norway.

Because I was going to transcribe the interviews in order to code them, I used a Dictaphone to tape all the interviews.<sup>25</sup> This created a rather formal atmosphere, but in an attempt to make the respondents feel more at ease, I would talk some nonsense, tape it, and then let the volunteers also speak into the tape before we started the interview itself. Not only did this relax them, but it also allowed me to test the equipment, i.e. that the tape was working, that the batteries were not flat, that there really were batteries, etc. A few of the volunteers were a bit uncomfortable, but the majority gave the impression that they were excited and spoke as if they were not bothered. Although the volunteers are not used to being interviewed, they are used to speaking in front of groups and they seemed comfortable during the interviews. While my supervisor was still looking at the transcript of the first interview, I continued with other interviews.

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<sup>25</sup> Audiotape recording and subsequent transcription is a very common method of recording interviews (Kvale 1996: 162).

It is important to bear in mind that the transcripts are not the rock-bottom data of research based on interviews. Transforming the interview from sound to text involves both methodological and theoretical problems. To improve the reliability of the transcripts one can do what Kvale recommends: ask another person to transcribe the same text and to check for errors (1996: 162). I did not do this but when still in Cape Town I sat down with the interviewee while transcribing unclear parts, and at other times, a friend who spoke the same first language as the interviewees, listened to the tape and helped me ascertain what the interviewees were saying. When I could not understand the words, or the information was lost due to, for example, a plane passing over us, I marked this in the transcript as “IL” (information lost), rather than guessing what the interviewees were saying. I chose a verbatim rather than a more coherent written style. I included every word I could hear, every pause and every little “ahm...” In my view, this approach and actually doing all the transcribing myself, does more justice to the interviewee as it reflects more closely the flow of the conversation and the interviewee’s style.<sup>26</sup> (See Appendix 8 for a guide for reading the transcripts).

Clearly, transcribing is a complex process, and I think that Kvale is correct in saying that the inter-subjective reliability of the researcher could develop into a research project on its own (1996: 164-165). Transcripts are useful tools for particular purposes, such enabling the researcher to read the interviews and to code them by using a software programme. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that transcripts are de-contextualized conversations. It is like a map, and there are no objective maps. Throughout, I was therefore focusing on the question “What is a useful transcription for my research purposes?” rather than asking, “What is the correct transcription?” as there is no answer to this question (ibid).

The period within which the interviews were conducted was both exciting and frustrating. Some interviews were being postponed for various reasons; to some extent, there were language barriers; there was limited time to complete all the

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<sup>26</sup> If I had interview material from more than 12 interviews, I might have considered getting someone to transcribe them. Although it saves the researcher’s time, it can be expensive if one has to pay for the job. Another concern would be to trust another person to do transcription in the same way as me.

interviews; and there was a lack of appropriate space to do the interviews (see Appendix 6 for interview schedule and complications). Furthermore, I had to return to Norway just after finishing all the interviews. Obviously, it would have been better to follow Wengraf's recommendation: to transcribe each interview before conducting the next one. This was impossible to do, but if I had had more time and resources, this way of working would have raised the standard of the research. While transcribing, I made memo sheets, especially for questions I wanted to ask the volunteers by phone and email to obtain richer information from them. Once all the interviews had been transcribed, I re-read them very carefully. This is in accordance with Grounded Theory (Open University 1993: 15 in De Wet and Erasmus 2003: 12) and a practice that Miles and Haberman (1994) rely on when recommending systematic procedures in qualitative analysis. This was helpful in order to keep the respondents separated, and it helped me to ensure the integrity of each transcript (De Wet and Erasmus 2003: 13). I worked with a copy of the tapes, as I had placed the originals in my bank box to ensure their safety. The last step of the process was to code the interviews, as explained in the next section.

## **Coding**

Codes are efficient data-labelling and data-retrieval devices that speed up and improve analysis. Miles and Haberman (1994: 65) recommend that current notes be coded before the next trip to the site, irrespective of any excuses the researcher makes for delaying this process. Although I do not doubt the importance of this recommendation, I think it might only apply to experienced researchers who spend a long time in the field. I do not feel that it applies to students who have limited time in the field and who work more slowly because they are less experienced, and have no assistant researchers or transcribers. Practically, it was impossible for me to code each interview before I did the next one.

In addition, I also did not prepare a list of codes before the interviews. Miles and Haberman (1994: 58) recommend this, and describe it as a start list that begins with a master code. As my research questions and interview interventions had already been explicitly dealt with before the interviews, they had served as such a start list for me. This is also in line with the work of Babbie and Mouton's process of coding (2001).

Within the Grounded approach, originally advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1976), the inductive researcher might not want to pre-code any datum until it has been collected and until one can see how it functions or nests in the context. There are several suggestions on how to code in this method. I find Strauss (1979) offers the most appropriate method, although I do not agree with him in every respect. Strauss suggests, for example, to look for phrases that are used repeatedly by informants, as they are good leads pointing to similarities in the setting (or internal differences, as Miles and Haberman (1994: 70) call them). My coding is not content specific, but points to the general domains in which codes can be developed inductively. Lofland (1971) and Bogdan and Biklen (1992) provide examples of this in Miles and Haberman (1994: 61).

Regardless of the approaches to coding, i.e. whether they are pre-defined, accounting-scheme guided or post-defined, codes need to be revised as field experience develops.

When Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was developed, it contributed to a more rigorous and systematic practice in analysing information. The type of software I used was the qualitative software package *QSR Nvivo* (Nvivo). The way I dealt with codes was to use post-defined codes for the pilot interview, which codes were not clearly linked to the interview questions. I wrote definitions of the codes alongside the coding. Miles and Haberman (1994: 63) point out that, regardless of whether codes are prescribed or developed along the way, clear operational definitions are essential. This also makes it easier to apply the codes consistently over time. The codes used in this research derive from the research question and through codes that developed during coding (see Appendix 6 for definitions of codes). Serious technical problems cropped up on the laptop I was working on, the only place from which I could access the Nvivo programme. As a result I could not code all the interviews as described in this section. This is a drawback but I feel that I at least had a very good grasp of the interviews from reading each one several times.

I tried to make the codes fit into a structure in which they were related or distinct to each other in meaningful ways. When new codes or definitions occurred during coding, I immediately wrote these down in the coding list. To check reliability, a

friend of mine read the codes and coded parts of a subset of interviews. Within the limitations of finances and time, this was my best option available. Coding is definitely a form of data analysis, but many authors (e.g. Miles and Huberman 1994: 50, Neuman 2000: 419 and Dey 1993:37, in De Wet and Erasmus 2003:11) agree that analysis occurs to various degrees throughout the research process, including the data collection phase.<sup>27</sup>

## **Conversations**

Only a fraction of all the hours I spent at the NGO was used for the formal interviews. As I am rather talkative and curious, and as I had a good relationship with the volunteers and staff members, we had numerous conversations. This combination of formal interviews and general conversations was very useful. Informal qualitative data was thus collected in interviews without a tape recorder, in daily speech, through observations in various settings and in discussions with the respondents. I often spent time alone with the volunteers, and gained valuable information and a more contextualised picture. I shared a car with my flat mates, and when I took it to the NGO, I gave some of the volunteers a lift home, or we drove to meetings together, etc. The car became not only a means of transportation but also a marker of “conversational communities” (Gudeman and Rivera, 1990 in Lie, 2004: 21). My tours around the area and the rides home with some of the volunteers were very interesting experiences. Driving back to the office after a meeting, I was able to share their excitement or frustration, depending on how the meeting went. Picking up or giving a ride to a volunteer because of a misunderstanding between him or her and the staff made me the natural container for their frustration or anger. The drives also introduced me to parts of the Cape Flats where I would never have gone on my own, and I saw the neighbourhoods and houses of 8 of the volunteers plus the Manager. The car was also an excellent place for observing the conversations between the volunteers. Transport seemed to be a never-ending problem in the NGO, so I was glad to help out, not only because it helped my research.

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<sup>27</sup> This way of working with the interviews was taught to me by Zimitri Erasmus, in the course “In Depth Interviewing and Analysis” and by Kvale’s ‘Seven stages in an interview process’ (Kvale 1996: 88, in Babbie et al 2001: 290).

## Questionnaire

The questionnaires generated my only quantitative data, and their data accuracy is questionable. I conducted a questionnaire survey of 16 respondents, including the volunteers with whom I did in-depth interviews, with the objective of identifying various issues related to the theory questions I had developed. There are obvious shortcomings in my survey, as well as with regard to sample size and type, and primarily due to my lack of knowledge and experience in how to conduct surveys. This is not an excuse, but experience does often go hand in hand with quality. There are approximately 25 volunteers in the NGO, and I intended to get data from all of them. As mentioned earlier, though, it was difficult to gather all the volunteers together in one place at one time. I feared that I would get few returns if I simply left the questionnaires in the office to be completed when volunteers came to the office. Confidentiality also played a role here, as I would not be able to collect it from them in person, and as the facilities did not offer any safe place to leave the questionnaires for me to pick up.

Nonetheless, despite these shortcomings, the survey does show some general trends, especially regarding the volunteers' motivations and their relationships to the NGO. Administering the questionnaires was a personal experience in how to make and collect this type of material. It was also a different approach for the volunteers compared to only talking with me about volunteering and it unearthed some useful information. I made charts for each question, which was useful for finding specific information from the questionnaires in a very short time. I constructed a pilot questionnaire and had a volunteer from another programme complete it to test it. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 244), pre-testing is a generally neglected phase in questionnaire construction in South Africa. However, as the researcher is likely to make mistakes in questionnaires, it is important to pre-test them, even more so when more than one culture or language is involved. Both the volunteers and I were using English as a second language, and the person who filled in the pilot questionnaire made me aware of a number of confusing questions. Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggest giving the questionnaire to ten friends. I, however, felt that it would be more productive to give it to other volunteers, as they were much closer to



the target group than my friends (see Appendix 7 for the questionnaire given to the volunteers).

### **Social Network Maps**

Another approach I used involved social network mapping (SNM), taken from the field of social work.<sup>28</sup> The respondents were given a large sheet of paper and a pen. They were asked to draw a big circle, lines and '5 pieces of cake' so that the sketch looked like a spider's web, with a small circle in the centre, representing themselves (see Appendix 9 for an example of a map and the instruction sheet I gave to the volunteers). Each of the 5 'pieces of the cake' represented a category, in this case, the NGO, friends, hobbies, family and others. I chose this method rather than using sociometry because I am more familiar with it. I was also more interested in seeing their free drawings of the map rather than me writing down the observed communication. Again, I could not gather all the volunteers together in one place at one time, even if I provided lunch.<sup>29</sup> Nine of the volunteers participated in this and drew their maps.

My main analysis of the maps focused on which people in the NGO they put down, and how close they felt themselves to be to these individuals. I had been observing some sub-groups in the group as a whole, as well as some conflicts, and I wanted to get information that would either confirm or refute my observations. The maps did confirm some of my observations, as well as providing a few surprises. The volunteers were new to this method and found it hard, as it involved much thought about who was in your network and 'where' they were, but they did seem to enjoy it. I did a pilot study of this technique as well, by asking a friend to draw the map and to help me make the instructions clearer.

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<sup>28</sup> Social network mapping is often used in family therapy and work with people who need extra care. The aim is to get an understanding of a person's own social network. The method is believed to have originated in the Aborigine culture in Australia. For a more thorough definition:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_networking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_networking)

<sup>29</sup> The volunteers were always ready to eat, if not hungry. The Manager told me it would be a good idea to give them something to eat before drawing the map and before completing the questionnaire. He said (based on his experience) that they were more likely to come and that they would concentrate better after a meal.

## Observation

“Participation is essential for survival in the field”

(Srinivas et al 2002: 6)

I feel that I have to begin this section with a grateful acknowledgement to the NGO and the Cape Flats community as a whole for allowing me to observe them. I feel that I was “found by the field instead of finding it” (Srinivas 2002: 7), and I am grateful for that. Much of the data gathered for this study was obtained through participant observation. I was simultaneously a member of the group I was studying and a researcher. Participant observations may create various dilemmas involved in simultaneously observing and being a part of a group (Babbie and Mouton 2001).

The difficulties I faced were not severe, but they did make me reflect on and examine my role. One type of situation occurred in formal meetings when I preferred to observe and not speak on the behalf of the NGO, as I was asked to by the programme manager. Another situation arose when my date of departure from South Africa was approaching, and I did not have as much time for the interviews as I had planned. I felt I had to fuss about the interviews and because of that, had to separate from my participative role for a while. Srinivas et al (2002: 4) reflect upon the issue of the researcher having a role. On the one hand, they suggest that there might be valid reasons for the field worker not to be typecast in any role, except that of an outsider. On the other hand, if the researcher does not have a specific role, it may heighten the fieldworker’s problem of legitimacy. He or she might be considered an unwelcome intruder. I think these difficulties vary enormously according to the field of study, the motives for studying and the personality of the researcher. In the end, I definitely agreed with the following statement by Srinivas et al and adopted the following role:

“The only option open for the fieldworker in most situations is to be what he really is – a friendly and curious outsider. People know that the fieldworker is a middle-class person with a university education, and they are willing to deal with him as such and not feign status equality with them” (ibid).

Srinivas and the two other Indian authors of the book "*The fieldworker and the field*" (2002) also emphasise another important issue that is easily overlooked: the fieldworker him/herself is under surveillance too. I often felt I was under surveillance, specially in situations new to me and I did not know what I was expected to do or say.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 296), ultimately, everything a participant observer does will have some effect on what is being observed. This was also true in my case. Doing what the volunteers did and asking questions (after a particular situation or event) became a strategy that I frequently used to avoid interfering more than necessary. On the other hand, I do not know for sure whether my questions perhaps led to a different behaviour manifesting in that same or similar situations the next time.

More often than not, when arriving at the NGO, I had not planned what to observe. This is due to two reasons. Firstly, I wanted the volunteers in a sense to 'show' me what I should observe, and thus to show me what the order of the day was. After a while, I began to see patterns and deviations, and then paid particular attention to particular aspects. Secondly, I was often only told on the day when an event was happening, that it was actually happening. This resulted in many interesting, unplanned observation situations. I soon realised the importance of being flexible and positive, and not having to 'know everything' in advance. Perhaps it was an issue of 'cultural difference', as I come from a society where the term 'African time' is a joke, not a reality. However, other members in the NGO did show frustration at the lack of communication and at not being informed of things in advance. Everyone in the NGO has a space on the common notice board, where they can indicate briefly where they were going to be on a weekly basis. This information was inadequate and unreliable, though, and this affected my research negatively. Sometimes volunteers made appointments with me, but then had to go off to events that could not wait. Often, they had not been told about these events, or they had forgotten about them. Such observations however, have little value if they are not written down in a systematic way. The last section in this chapter thus looks at field notes.

## Field Notes

I had a notebook with me every time I was at the NGO. Usually I noted whatever I found interesting. Later, when I became sure of my research topic, I was more systematic. For a period, I transcribed these notes onto the computer, in as detailed and accurate a form as I could remember from the day I'd spent at the NGO (see Appendix 10 for examples of field notes). Babbie and Mouton (2001) say one should not trust one's memory more than necessary. They recommend that the researcher keep at least two sets of notes, one describing the environment of the study, including extensive observation notes, and the other containing theoretical memoranda (ibid: 275). I kept it all in the same book, but separated the book into different sections, and used different signs and numbers to help me remember. Entries had to be made daily, though, and this involved a lot of selection of information, as so much happened each day that it would have been impossible to note everything. Naturally, I chose what was closest to my topic and thus left out much other information. Field notes are time consuming, but a very important part of the research methods and can improve the validity and reliability of the findings. The aim of data collection is to arrive at particular findings. In the next chapter, having used the methods set out in this chapter, I will present in detail what the analysis of the collected data revealed about the volunteers' motivations.

## CHAPTER 4

### MOTIVATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

“Perhaps people have an inclination to donate their time because they are fundamentally selfish; they are hoping for a reward when they engage in apparently altruistic acts. “To give is to receive.” Perhaps not. Humans have been known to give when there is no prospect of return in their lives” (Brown 1998: 122).

In this chapter I present the findings of my field study and the methodological considerations presented in the previous chapter will help me to retain my focus on the volunteers. In this section, then, I will first present the volunteers’ own statements regarding their motivations for volunteering. This is in line with the Grounded Theory approach, as I will explore and examine the data as it emerges. I agree with Dalland (2000), saying that people who are the subjects of a study, in this case the volunteers, will be seen and presented as living, thinking, dreaming and creating people and, therefore, their behaviour cannot be explained by using positivism or natural science schemes.

Firstly, I am looking for common features. In this case, it means what the volunteers have in common regarding the motivational factors they mentioned in their questionnaires. My presentation of these results is divided in two sections, the first of which is focused on open-ended answers, whereas the second looks at the rated answers in the questionnaire. Secondly, I am looking for deviations. I thus ask whether any of the volunteers makes a comment or raises an issue that is different from that of his or her colleagues. Thirdly, I question whether some of the volunteers’ motivation has changed over time and what the reasons for this may be. Lastly, I focus on the possibility that each volunteer may have many different reasons for volunteering, and I try to identify these. The central research question that was guiding me throughout was: “What do the volunteers report to be their reasons for

volunteering?” The first and second theory questions (TQ) were also very important in keeping the study on the track and in focus.<sup>30</sup> The following statements are the open-ended answers in the questionnaire, which will be elaborated on by comments drawn from the interviews. I use these answers as the starting point because the questionnaires contain the initial information gathered, except for the observations. They moreover represent the eleven volunteers’ spontaneous answers regarding motivation, in contrast to the closed-ended sections in the questionnaire, where I merely asked them to tick 1-5 to my written statements. When answering question number four in the questionnaire (viz. “What is your main motivation for being a volunteer?”), the volunteer’s responded as follows:

- I enjoy the work. I feel I want to give back to the community and it is something I want to do for a certain period of time in my life
- Having seen myself as more “fortunate” in that I lived with both parents, house, food etc., and in the manner my parents reared me and my “feelings”, I want to help others and be of service
- To be a role model, to give back to the community and make a change to our people’s ignorant ways
- To make positive change in young people’s lives where change is needed. To show them life can be fun and enjoyable without negative things (e.g. drugs, being disrespectful, trying to be cool)
- To make a change in a young person’s life
- To be there for those kids who need help and I know I will be a good role model for them. It doesn’t go about the total but at least make a change in one of their lives
- Gaining some kind of working experience
- Keep myself occupied and not become lazy before I go study next year
- I have a love for people and always enjoyed working with them and I want to expand my views because I’m currently and always have been in community projects and local holiday clubs etc.

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<sup>30</sup> TQ1: What relationship do the volunteers have to the NGO? TQ2: What, if any, impact does the NGO have on what the volunteers refer to as their personal development? TQ3: What is it that the volunteers report to achieve from volunteering for the NGO?

- If you have a title, you will never know what it means. To love what you are doing you must have a passion
- The love of Christ that compels me to make a difference for the area I live in (The children and youth in the NGO)

Each of these statements will now be presented in a more detailed way, in conjunction with my comments and substantiated by further quotations from the volunteers. The statements that appear to be similar to each other are presented under the same heading, e.g.

- a) to give back to community and to be of service,
- b) to make a difference and to be a role model,
- c) out of a love for people and a passion for the work.

Three motivations that were reported by individual volunteers, and which were not mentioned by any others are: to gain work experience, to avoid becoming lazy and out of a love for Christ. Some of the volunteers may have various motivations, which means that it would be misleading to focus only on a single statement. This will be presented later in this chapter.

## **Common Motivations**

### **Giving back to the Community and Being of Service**

The feeling expressed by some of the volunteers, of wanting to give back to their community, will be examined herein. This answer was given specifically by Charles, Lenny and Steve. Charles had a difficult childhood, which he described in his interview. Although he did not lack anything, he did not have much either. As a child, he was exposed to violence, alcohol and drug abuse, separation from his parents due to job situations, and multiple relocations.<sup>31</sup>

In the interview, Charles said that his gratitude and motivation to give back was in response to the hardship he had experienced while growing up. He said that he would

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<sup>31</sup> It is beyond the scope of this research to analyse the childhood of the volunteers, and I am not suggesting that their experiences determined their choice of career. Nevertheless, childhood experiences are important and will be presented here as far as possible by using the volunteers' own words.

not have been a good volunteer, working with children facing various problems, if his own childhood had only been happy and fulfilled.<sup>32</sup> Intermingled with the stories of hardship that Charles told, though, were stories of joy: his eyes were sparkling, for instance, when he talked about his friends, his family and a nanny he had lived with and how she taught the children to share everything and to care for each other. Charles said that he was grateful and felt he had always been given what he needed:

“I was always given, I’m still being given to, from my community, from my family and things like that and I am in a position where I can do something good, where I can maybe not make a big difference, but maybe a difference in one person’s life (...) because we have to start *somewhere*. Next year I’ll be gone because I know that I have done my part, or that I have at least tried. Maybe I didn’t do my part, but at least I tried” (Interview with Charles 17.06.2004).

Lenny’s childhood was similar to Charles’, as I will show later. Lenny listed three motivations, but at this point, I only look at his wish to “give back to the community”. Lenny’s view on society contains, amongst other things, the assertion that we are all building blocks of and that we are all responsible for each other. He feels it would be selfish of him to keep his life experiences and knowledge to himself:

“Our people lack vision, our people lack education, our people lack... so many things and seeing that I have been educated I am two steps or three steps ahead of someone else so that doesn’t make me, it doesn’t entitle me to just take what I learned and share with whoever *outside* of this country but that I have to give back and that is how someone challenged me three, four years ago by telling me now that you have accomplished all this and you’ve learned all this and you want to leave, which is unfair. You should give back to your community and I’ve been giving back for the last three years and it still hasn’t stopped” (Interview with Lenny 19.06.2004).

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<sup>32</sup> In this chapter, childhood is defined as the age from 0 to 16 years old.



His words suggest that he did not feel he had a choice – he *had* to give back to his community. In response to my probing, though, he said: “Not actually, you don’t *have* to give back, but it feels right to give back to other people. As with Charles, Lenny also seems paradoxically grateful for the hardship he has faced, as his experiences are invaluable for him when working with children. Amongst other things, he said the following about his childhood:

“I’ve been exposed to alcohol from birth basically. Both my parents were captured in alcohol (...) I started stealing my father’s wine. He used to be drunk and whatever and we would steal other things from him as well (...) my parents used to fight. They were really violent. Once my mother was taken to hospital and they continued to fight when she came back” (Interview with Lenny 19.06.2004 and personal conversation, undated).

When hearing about Charles’ and Lenny’s childhood, one might initially think that they are likely to feel that the community owes them something, rather than the other way around, and that the community should give back to them because it had not protected them when they were children. And yet, despite, or perhaps rather because of, the hardship Charles and Lenny faced as children, an important motivation is to give back to the community.<sup>33</sup>

Steve also indicated that he was motivated by giving back to his community; “I want to help others and be of service”. In contrast to Lenny and Charles, however, Steve stated that he had always been “fortunate” in his childhood, and that he therefore wanted to give back. It is beyond the limits of this thesis to examine this in depth but it does show that seeing oneself as fortunate and thus doing the best with what one has might have been a very important motivator for some of the volunteers. Thus,

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<sup>33</sup> Both Charles and Lenny (and William and Andy) spoke about participating in ‘gangster like’ behaviour in their youth. Could it be that they are volunteering because they feel guilty for this period in their lives? They have never mentioned this as a possible reason for wanting to ‘do good’, so this is purely speculation on my part. Through various conversations I got the impression that, despite their rough childhood (and sometimes still facing difficulties as young adults), they now want to show children in the area that, even though life can be tough, there are options and “you can do it”, i.e. you can avoid fighting, drinking, bullying and doing drugs. There might thus be truth behind the speculation that these four young men, on the one hand, want to ‘pay back’ for previous misbehaviour, and on the other, wanting to prevent other children from doing what they did and showing them positive alternatives.

although Steve also feels obliged to give back to the community and to be of service, in contrast to Charles and Lenny, he is inspired by his fortunate childhood:

“I always felt privileged when I was among them [friends and people in the neighbourhood] not *arrogant* but privileged you know, for having the things that I have and I think ahm, I think... I want to share some of that because I, because I strongly believe as much as you give... the more you get back... and I think that has been true for my life. I believe that I’ve given very little, but I’ve had many blessings (...) I feel that I relatively had a good upbringing. I think I was always brought up to share what I have you know ya, to share what I have and the one interest that I always had at school was to *help* people” (Interview with Steve 18.06.2004).

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Steve has a strong opinion that people who come from the Cape Flats are thought to ‘feel less than’. He sees this as a problem because it prevents people moving forward. He thus wants to instil the belief into people – particularly children – that they are worth a lot, that they are equal and not ‘less than’ people would like them to believe because of apartheid and their origins. Because of the history of the country, Steve maintains, people on the Cape Flats think that they are dependant, for example, on the government, white people or wealthy people, that people owe them something, and that they are victims (Conversation with Steve 12.03.2004). Steve thus feels he should give back to the community because he was fortunate in a disadvantaged community and because it is possible for him to help:

“Your life experience in terms of living within this community, attending school in this community you have then some form of opinion or some form of skill that you can give back, for example; the one skill is understanding where the very young people that we work with come from...” (Interview with Steve 18.06.2004).

## **Making a Difference, and Being a Role Model**

Every single one of the volunteers reported in the interview that their motivation was to “make a difference”. Specifically, this meant being important to a child and contributing to positive change for a child in the schools where the volunteers work.<sup>34</sup> In the questionnaire, however, only William, Martha and Anna stated that this was their main motivation for volunteering. William, for example, told me about someone who was a very important person to him, and who made a difference in his life. Although this will be elaborated upon later, the quotation below does show how William feels motivated by the intention to make a difference:

“We try, to make this area a better place because we see it, the youngsters like, they totally, they are poor and they are getting poorer and they have behavioural problems or whatever, but we are trying our best and we have seen some changes in the kids cause we, I experienced it last year with this one kid and I got a medal for it (big smile) cause I, I changed his life and I am like a role model to him and ya, it made me burst into tears and this, yhaa, it, it made me feel good man, feel good and that is why I do all this work” (Interview with William 17.06.2004).

Martha is very confident that her role as a motivator is having an impact on the children with whom she works. Like the other volunteers, she seems to be highly motivated for her sessions, and she said that making a difference makes her feel excellent as she phrased it:<sup>35</sup>

“It’s an excellent feeling that you get inside of you man (...) the, the feeling that you *know* somebody’s life is gonna be changed whether it’s only one person or whether its half a person, but you know that there is a change, about to happen and stuff, you *know* that because no one in that room motivates the way *I* motivates and I believe that no one can leave without feeling something” (Interview with Martha 21.06.2004).

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<sup>34</sup> This understanding is based on discussions with the volunteers, on the interviews and on observations.

<sup>35</sup> There is no external method of evaluation to prove whether the volunteers are indeed making a difference or not. However, it is not the task of this study to examine the results that the volunteers claim to achieve, but to study their motivations.

Anna, too, stated that making a difference was an important motivation. She is relatively new to the NGO, having been there for five months when the interview took place. Anna's role is more that of an assistant to the other more experienced volunteers. They lead, are responsible for and plan the sessions. Anna's role ranges from taking notes from discussions, writing on the black board when the volunteers present the topic of the session, and talking with the children. She also feels that she is making a positive difference:

"From my opinion this community is a drug area. I can... make changes in a person's life, more than in one person's life, by being there for those kids, motivating in every way I can and just allow them to be children. They are looking up to me as a role model, not someone else that just plays game in a game shop" (Interview with Anna 21.06.2004).

#### **A Love for People, Passion for the Work, and Life Purpose**

Andy and Lee explained in their questionnaires that their reasons for volunteering were a love for people and a passion for the work, and that it was their purpose in life. Lee has always been involved in community work, but Andy has had no such long-term involvement before joining the NGO in 2001. They have both experienced different types of hardship in their lives, but both regard this as giving them an advantage when working with children. From time to time in the interview, they struggled to explain why they were volunteers:

"I'm doing this because I love what I'm doing. And I'm not doing this for me but for my children to come, I'm doing this, because, because I love it. I will do it for as long as I can. For as long as I have breath in my, my lungs you know, as long as there is life in me. Cause I know this is my purpose. It's nothing else I wanna do cause the children are more important than anything else" (Interview with Andy 10.06.2004).

“I’m a people’s person, I love working with the youths, I love kids, I love impacting the lives of others”. “Where does this love come from?” “I’m not really sure (smiling), I, think, that this, this has always been in me, I, I love people, I’m just, you give me a new person and I get along with him as if I have known him for years. So ahm this love has always been there” (Interview with Lee 21.06.2004).

The analysis of the questionnaires proved useful, especially for finding regularities with regard to the volunteers’ motivations.<sup>36</sup> Even though the questionnaire required the volunteers to rate their motivations from 1-5, I am categorizing their responses into only 3 groups (in accordance with the work of Lorentzen and Rogstad 1994). Ratings 1 and 2 represent an important motivation for the volunteers, rating 3 represents a neutral attitude towards the motivation, and ratings 4 and 5 represents an unimportant motivation. The selection of the 6 statements in the following table is based on which of the 18 statements in total at least 7 or more volunteers agreed upon.<sup>37</sup> (This table does not contain statements that are related to the volunteers’ personal development, which will be presented later).

Table 2. The motivations upon which 7 or more volunteers agreed:

Statements as in the questionnaire	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
“I will meet interesting people”	11	0	0
“Because of pressure from family/friends/others”	0	1	10
“I like to work with children”	10	1	0
“It will look good on my CV”	9	2	0
“I will meet new friends”	9	2	0
“It will make it easier for me to get a job”	7	4	0

The volunteers’ rating of these statements closely corresponded with what they wrote in the rest of the questionnaire, with what I observed and with what they said in the interviews.

<sup>36</sup> The motivations I chose for the questionnaire were based on observations and various conversations with the volunteers and the staff. The entire questionnaire can be found in Appendix 7.

<sup>37</sup> A selection had to be made and to me it made sense to draw the majority line amongst 11 volunteers at 7.

Interestingly, none of the volunteers said that they were volunteering “because of pressure from family/friends/others.” It could be argued that this was not relevant for them, because they live in a disadvantaged community, which is less likely to suggest that its youth do unpaid volunteer work. The unemployment rate here is high, after all, and there is strong pressure on the youth to find a job and contribute to the family’s financial well-being. I am not saying that the parents in this community or in other disadvantaged communities do not encourage their adolescents to participate in voluntary work. What I would like to highlight, though, is that the volunteers in my study are all fulltime volunteers who spend an average of approximately 8 hours volunteering per day, which means that they are not likely to have time or energy to carry out formal work as well.<sup>38</sup> With regard to the statement: “I get money” the results are interesting: None of the volunteers mentioned money in the open-ended answers; only 2 out of 11 agreed in response to the closed-ended questions that money was indeed a motivation for them; and none of them said in the interview that the money they receive for their voluntary work is important for them. Instead, they made statements like “We are not doing this for the money” (Interview with William on 17.06.04). Based on the similar results from three different sources, it thus seems as though money is really not a motivating factor for the volunteers. However, the Manager’s communication about the pressure experienced by the volunteers to earn money was confirmed by some of the volunteers during the interviews, and the joy I observed on the paydays, leads to a more nuanced approach to the money issue. In my understanding, based on the information above, the volunteers would also volunteer if they did not earn any money. Their surroundings, including parental pressure and their own desire to be able to buy themselves new things, does nonetheless make money an important motivation now when they are used to getting it, but it does not seem to be a deep-rooted motivation for any of them.

The motivations presented above are representative of more than one volunteer. The next section will describe the motivations reported in the open-ended questions by individual volunteers.

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<sup>38</sup> The Manager pointed out in various private conversations that parents were putting pressure on the volunteers to get a proper job. This is one reason why he was striving to obtain finances to pay stipends to the volunteers.

The motivations presented above are representative of more than one volunteer. The next section will describe the motivations reported in the open-ended questions by individual volunteers.

## **Less Common Motivations**

### **Gaining Work Experience**

Melanie was the only volunteer whose sole motivation was to gain work experience. She had been at home for a few years after matriculating, before deciding to look for a job. As is the case with many other young South Africans, Melanie had trouble finding a job, including part-time and temporary work. She explained why she wanted to gain experience in administrative skills:

“Looking for jobs in the paper, most of the jobs that you find in the papers calls for jobs which comes down to administration work, and I thought if I can get some experience there [in the NGO], maybe I can get experience to work as an administrator for a start” (Interview with Melanie 10.06.2004).

She contacted different organisations, one which recommended that she contact the NGO, as this needed a volunteer for administrative work. Three and a half years ago Melanie first came as a volunteer to the NGO, and she sees herself volunteering for two more years.

### **Avoiding Laziness**

Maria would like to study, but she must wait a year because her family does not have enough money as there is a wedding taking place this year. Her parents know the NGO manager personally, and they thus arranged for her to volunteer in the organisation. Maria feels that volunteering will give her valuable working experience. More importantly, she said that it would prevent her becoming lazy, and that it would mean she would not become dependent on earning a proper income, while she is waiting to be a student:

“I decided that I want to do voluntary work because if I was gonna do, if I was gonna have a job that was gonna pay me, I’m gonna be more independent [economically], so when I go study I, maybe I wouldn’t do it because you’ve been so independent all the time and now when you have to go study it’s gonna feel like I don’t have money; I don’t wanna study; I go back to work, so (laughing) that’s why” (Interview with Maria 14.06.2004).

As a result, she agreed that the statement, “I get money”, in the questionnaire was an important reason for her to volunteer. Although she does not want to earn a proper income, the monthly stipend she receives (R300) is nonetheless important to her.

### **Expressing a Love for Christ**

The last response to be presented in this section is that of Linda. She was the only one who had written down “religion” as a motivation for volunteering. Linda feels, as do Steve, Lenny and Charles, that she has been very fortunate and she thanks God for this. Linda has studied at a Christian College and she underlines the importance of Jesus in her work:

“The calling in our life is that I need to love. That is what God wants me to do; God wants me to love those that are happy. God wants me to reach out to those that are lonely and God wants me to share his life and his love through my life ahm, just to, to know that I am an ambassador for Him and, whatever I do is to glorify Him. He would pray for the lonely and he would love a lot and he would be a friend to those who just need somebody to listen and that is, that is, I believe that is my calling, just to make a difference in one person’s life then I’ve reached what *Christ* wants me to do” (Interview with Linda 15.06.2004).

Linda is very consistent with regard to religion being her motivation for volunteering. Very early in our conversations, she asked if I had Jesus in my heart and she often talked about Christianity, although not, in a missionary way. She knows that everything that happens is God’s will and she has an amazing ability of making the best out of every situation. Not surprisingly, Linda ticked “strongly agree” on the



motivation in the questionnaire “Because of my religious beliefs”. None of the other volunteers did so, and none mentioned religion in the open ended questions either. Does this mean that religion is not important for the 9 other volunteers, even though they stated that they were Christian?<sup>39</sup> When looking at the data derived from the questionnaire, it seems that religion is not important, but it emerged clearly from the interviews that everyone mentioned God, as they spoke of Christianity or God as being important to them. Anna expressed it this way:

“God is very important to me... how can I say, in the morning when I open my eyes I pray: oh, God take me through this day” (Interview with Anna 21.06.2004).

### **Changes in Motivations over Time**

In the questionnaire, I also asked: “Are you happy with your current position?” Eight volunteers said “yes”, three were “neutral”. As Clary et al (1992) argue, it is important to find appropriate positions and tasks for each volunteer, to keep them motivated. The needs of the volunteers and their motivations are not likely to be constant over time, though. As presented above, Melanie’s initial reason for volunteering was to gain some work experience, particularly in administrative skills, as most of the jobs advertised in the papers required this. After a few months, however, she no longer found this kind of work enjoyable. This might have led to her leaving the NGO, but luckily for her and the NGO, she continued.<sup>40</sup> When she originally started working in the office as an administrator, serving her original motivation for volunteering, Melanie was taking part in various programmes operating directly with children and adolescents, as well as people in a local clinic. Although she is still volunteering to gain work experience, the field within which she wishes to gain this experience has changed dramatically. Working directly with people gives her a thrill that she never got from working with papers and numbers. Other volunteers have also changed their motivations over time, which seems to have been due to the expansion of the NGO and the new programmes that have been implemented. As the volunteers gained

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<sup>39</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> volunteer wrote in the questionnaire “I don’t believe in religion, only that there is a God”.

<sup>40</sup> This statement is based on observations of Melanie interacting with the other volunteers and the staff. She had earned their respect and was thus increasingly exposed to leadership roles, particularly with regard to the Life Skills programme.

experience, they were also given greater responsibilities and challenges. This is clearly serving to motivate them, according to the analysis of the questionnaire, as illustrated in the table above. Although the questionnaire did not go into detail regarding what types of challenges they were experiencing, the interviews showed that they were inspired and motivated by personal challenges, which make them grow as human beings.

## **The NGO's Impact on the Volunteers' Personal Development**

At the outset, I would like to point out that this is not a study in the field of psychology and that I have neither the intention nor the qualifications to examine the volunteers' personal development according to psychological standards. What I will do instead, is to present and discuss the personal development that the volunteers report to have undergone through volunteering in this particular NGO.<sup>41</sup> I will look for common features and less common ones, based on the interviews, my observations and the questionnaires. As mentioned in chapter 2 about the NGO, the aim of the NGO is to empower young people, including their own volunteers. This is why they also emphasize the personal development of their volunteers, as the Manager noted in his interview (22.06.2004). I will not examine how exactly the NGO does this, but will rather focus on the volunteers' experiences.

### **Common Features**

The following table is based on statements from the questionnaire related to personal development that 7 or more volunteers agreed upon:

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<sup>41</sup> Personal development in this context refers to contributing to the personal growth of the volunteers including their self-esteem, confidence, knowledge and behaviour. One could use an extensive definition on personal development, but this is what the Manager said is the NGO's understanding of personal development (personal conversation, undated).

Table 3. Statements related to the volunteers' personal development:

Statements from the questionnaire	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
"It makes me feel good about myself"	11	0	0
"I am gaining experience"	11	0	0
"I am being challenged"	11	0	0
"I am developing my personality"	9	2	0

Improving one's self-esteem and confidence was a phrase often used by the volunteers in the interviews. In fact, 8 of the 11 talked about how volunteering for the NGO had contributed positively to the growth of their self-esteem and/or confidence, and some of them also said that they felt that volunteering was crucial for developing these feelings. When I asked the volunteers how they felt they were developing personally, many said that the sessions in different training camps in which they had participated, as well as the sessions they held in schools, had been very important. Some sessions encouraged them to think about their own experiences and often they chose to tell stories from their own childhood if the topic of the day was, for example, "friendship" or "believe in yourself". Repeatedly standing in front of a class and talking about empowerment, how important it is to believe in oneself, and that everyone is special, has a positive impact on my own self-esteem, said some of the volunteers. The following quotations specify the impact that the various sessions had on Melanie and Lee:

"Helping other people has helped me to empower myself because of a lot of this work is where you empower people... and especially... with the Life Skills programme at the high schools, you do a lot of where you empower the young people in their personal development and I've gone into that and that is how I developed myself personally" (Interview with Melanie 10.06.2004).

"....especially the sessions that they did, in the training camps that I went on made me gain a lot more confidence seeing what other people can do and seeing that I'm capable of doing the same thing (...) the sessions were soul searching and about *life*. All that stuff we did, the river of life from when you were born and your river can either go up when it's a good thing and when it

goes down, something bad has happened to you, so it made me see all the things that I somehow have to deal with in order to make an impact on another person, that is what made an impact on me” (Interview with Lee 21.06.2004).

Martha, Anna and Maria also spoke about how the NGO had a positive impact on their personal development, much in line with what is expressed above by Lee and Melanie. Generally, these young women spoke positively about the NGO with regard to the personal friendships they have made there and commented that the NGO is like a family. Steve, however, did not share this attitude, as he is a very private person in many ways. We sometimes talked about relationships, for instance, and Steve would be very reluctant to get involved with and close to other people. He once remarked to me that “we meet so many wonderful people and suddenly they are gone” (personal conversation with Steve, undated). Although the social part did not matter as much for Steve as it did for the young women mentioned above, he also talked warmly about the personal development he had been blessed to experience by being a part of the NGO:

“I think this NGO contributed *a lot* to reduce my shyness, because I think that, still now I am a little bit shy, but I think that, ahm... in the manner which I was being treated, you know it contributed not only to my, my self-esteem but it also contributed to my *confidence*... because I think there was always this openness for *learning*, you know you would go and say this is what I *want* to do and there were always an encouraging; go and do it! I think having done that, ahm, I have learned a lot of things and so when it comes to those particularly issues particularly about work... I am very outspoken and I have a lot of opinions and, and all of those things but I am still a very *private* person. The people I worked with before, they are surprised because in staff meetings for example I never spoke irrespective of how bad or how *negative* I felt towards something I never spoke and I never raised my opinion you know, I just sat there and I think, and I think if you look at me now, you’ll say you’ll see the *confidence* in terms of... the way that I do my work, what I do, how I do it, those kind of things. I also think that *knowing* it was somebody believing in *me* you know in terms of what I did was very important (...) When I came

spirituality and religion and all of those kind of things, and today... although I've chosen a different path from my parents, in terms of, that relationship with, with God, we then have on a certain level an understanding that it is a higher power and that has somehow brought us closer" (Interview with Steve 18.06.2004).

## **Less Common Features**

The volunteers have different personalities and thus different motivations for volunteering. In this section I will present what some of the volunteers have said as not everyone feels that the NGO is necessarily contributing to their personal development.

### **The NGO has a Negative Impact on the Volunteers' Personal Development**

Not surprisingly, in view of what he said before, Lenny felt that the NGO had tried to break down his self-esteem rather than to encourage him. Linda did not talk about her own self-esteem and confidence in the interviews at all. However, she had a strong faith in, and gave many examples of how the NGO was important for developing or strengthening the volunteers' self-esteem.<sup>42</sup> Charles did not recognise any link between his personal development and the NGO, but attributed the tremendous changes he has gone through to the influence of his girlfriend and his family, and his own willpower. With a big smile, he remarked in an interview: "I did like a 1-80 on myself and just started going the right way for a change" (17.06.2004).

### **The NGO has a Very Positive Impact on the Volunteers' Personal Development**

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<sup>42</sup> Linda is viewed as a staff member by the other volunteers because she is older than most of them and is mainly doing office work.

The information I gathered about the volunteers revealed that Andy and William, like Charles, had also turned their lives around. What they told me about the impact the NGO had on their self esteem and their life in general clearly indicates that these two young men attribute much of it to the NGO:

“Honestly I, I’d probably would have been dead now [without the NGO]. I would have been dead. 6 feet under, you know... as I’ve said, I lost a lot of friends, out of quite a number. And...I thank God, that, that his purpose for me, was to meet the Manager in 2000” (Interview with Andy 10.06.2004).

Andy’s affirmation above echoes his commitment to the NGO and his very strong relationship with the Manager, as Andy thinks the Manager indirectly saved his life. Through our various conversations, Andy told me about many negative experiences he had had, the bad feelings he had experienced, the love for “his” children in the classes for whom he was responsible, and about many daily life tasks such as report writing, planning of the sessions, soccer and other things. I got the impression that he had found something in his life to which he could fully commit. On one occasion, I took some of the volunteers to the University for a Concert. It would have been crowded in the car if everyone had gone (as it had often been before). Andy said, “I’ll stay here, you go and enjoy yourself, guys, I’ll do some work here.” We all got the impression that he felt that he was the one who should “sacrifice” himself by staying in the office. Andy also sometimes talked about himself as being special and different, and that the children in the programme needed him very much.

In one of our spontaneous conversations, I discovered how he had met the Manager and why he had decided to change his life; the story was told in such a way that it is worth quoting the conversation we had here at length. It was on a camp about combating racism where I, as a foreigner (and the only white person in the group), was asked to talk about my country and what I thought about South Africa. During a break, I sat on a bench in the meeting room, writing, when Andy came and sat down next to me, shoulder to shoulder. I showed him what I was doing and he said, “It’s 5 weeks left now.” “No, it’s 6 weeks till I leave”, I said. I was thinking that he might want to talk about being a volunteer. As he went on talking about this topic, he was very focused and kept eye contact for a long time. His eyes were sparkling, and he

next to me, shoulder to shoulder. I showed him what I was doing and he said, "It's 5 weeks left now." "No, it's 6 weeks till I leave", I said. I was thinking that he might want to talk about being a volunteer. As he went on talking about this topic, he was very focused and kept eye contact for a long time. His eyes were sparkling, and he turned a bit so that he could face me more directly. He was talking fast and with passion, and this is mainly how our conversation went:

"I was doing something for the other NGO when he [the Manager] came and asked them for someone to help him with his house, and they picked me. That's how I met him. I went there and helped him make his house look nice. I said to him 'I trust no one'. I was still a dirty bugger then. The Manager and I we talked and talked and he asked if I had heard about the NGO and I said yes, I've read about you in the papers and stuff. He told me more about it and soon I started volunteering. I was the only volunteer then and I have stood by the Manager ever since. When others have left, I have stood by him. It took 3 years to change me to what I am now. Now I know how to write on a computer, I know how to write a formal letter, to make a telephone call. I know these things now that I didn't know before. And I am still the same Andy. I am still me (puts a hand on his heart). I have just grown, not really changed. Many of my friends from that time are dead. They got shot."

"Yes, I remember you told me about your friend, he was..."

(Andy interrupts me and says) "he died on me (clapping his shoulder, as to underline *on me*), he was shot. That was one of the things that changed me. And my baby sister, she said, please change, Andy, and that was it. I didn't want this anymore."

"What is it in it for you? What do you get, cause if you didn't get anything at all, you wouldn't be doing this, or?"

"It's the *love* you have for it. If you don't love it anymore, leave it. It is something in my heart, that, that drive for it. I get love, respect, those things man. I get challenges and I explore myself. I get anything! When I am doing this stuff, I, you know, you have it in your heart. You know, I used to be a

have a bad time at home, you can always go the NGO and there are people there who will listen to you” (Personal conversation with Andy 27.05.2004).

William became involved in the NGO, because he wanted to be a peer-educator and to be of service to his classmates, and because he wanted to make a change in his own life. As he said in the interview (17.06.2004), “I want other people to see the light in me”, and he wanted other people to see that he could change from bad to good. In this interview, the tone was very easy and we joked frequently, even if we were also speaking about very serious issues. When I probed on if he used to bad, he told me:

“I was a very, very bad boy (laughing). And, ok, like I said, I was not in a gang but I hanged out with them, it was like, before I met with the NGO. And, and... how can I say, you learn by your mistakes. And for me, I have learned by my mistakes, by what I did.”

“Ahm, how did the NGO contribute to, to turning you from bad to good as you said?”

“First of all, the knowledge that they gave me. My, how can I say, my self esteem, and I wasn’t like that kind of straight forward person but now, I’m...this, this open person... yeah, I started to *believe* in myself.”

“Can you give an example of what kind of knowledge they gave you?”

“First of all, the reason why I call it knowledge is... I didn’t at first know ‘who am I?’ and the NGO *gave* me the knowledge and gave me the opportunity to find out who I am and... the, the stuff that I know today, like the manuals [for use in the various programmes] and love life games or obstacle courses... that is all through the NGO (clears his throat) and seriously, I’ve worked *hard* for it. That’s like they say, if you work hard for it, you will see the results (big smile).”

“Is it anything special the NGO did, to help you find out who you are?”



“Is it anything special the NGO did, to help you find out who you are?”

“First of all, the team work experiences, you can’t do nothing on your own, and, yea... that’s basically it, you can’t, you can’t do anything on your own... (laughing).”

Both Andy and Lenny said that their families had had a positive impact on their change, but as for other adolescents in troubled situations, Andy and William were in need of so-called ‘significant others’. These can be someone else, other than the primary caretakers, who take on an important role in their lives and help them to get back on track.<sup>43</sup> From what I have observed and from what I have been told by the volunteers, it is clear that the NGO and the Manager is just such a significant other for Andy and William.

## Relationship with the NGO

Early in the process of this research, I got the impression that all the volunteers interviewed for my study had a positive relationship with the NGO. The focus of these relationships was on social relationships, referred to by Østeraas (2002) as the social benefits gained from volunteering. The social network maps proved useful as a starting point for talking about the relationship that the individual volunteer has with the NGO. The answer to the question “What relationship do the volunteers have with the NGO?” is further based on my observations, the interviews, conversations and the questionnaire. During the analysis, it felt natural to divide the volunteers’ relationship with the NGO into 4 different types:

- Those with an extremely positive relationship with other volunteers in the NGO,
- Those with an extremely positive relationship with the Manager,
- Those with a positive relationship with the NGO and, lastly,

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<sup>43</sup> Inge Bø writes about significant others in his book “*The child and the others*” (Norwegian ed. only). This also relates to the fact that it is hard to change a type of behaviour, if there is no alternative with which it can be replaced.

These will be presented shortly. First I will look at some common features applicable to the majority of the volunteers, meaning examining statements in the questionnaire to which 7 or more volunteers agreed.

## Common Features

The saying that “You can take me out of the NGO, but you can never take the NGO out of me” was something I heard volunteers and staff say often. In the questionnaire, I wanted to check how many volunteers agreed with this and other statements with regard to the relationship they have with the NGO. As I did when discussing the volunteers’ motivations, I will now present the statements on which 7 or more volunteers agreed.

Table 4. Relationship with the NGO - statements to which 7 or more volunteers agreed:

Statements in the questionnaire	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
“You can take me out of the NGO, but you can never take the NGO out of me”	10	0	1
“I am very committed to the NGO”	9	2	0
“As time goes by, I will get very attached to the NGO”	8	2	1
“It’s like a family”	7	2	2

These statements will not be discussed in detail one by one but have been incorporated into the text where appropriate. I have used these statements in the interviews as a starting point to encourage the volunteers to elaborate on their relationships with each other. This gave rise to many interesting answers.

## Extremely Positive Relationship with other Volunteers

I identified a group of 4 volunteers who reported that they had a very close relationship with other volunteers in the NGO.<sup>44</sup> What follows now is a presentation of how Lee, Martha, Anna and William view this relationship and what it means to

<sup>44</sup> Other cliques might have formed by the time the dissertation has been completed; there also might have been other cliques amongst the 16 volunteers whom I did not interview and therefore do not know about in detail.

them. In her interview, Lee told me about the time when she and a group of other volunteers decided to have a bonding session. They told each other whatever problematic situations they were facing, and promised each other to keep it in confidence. She said that this created a relationship that was not just a work relationship but also a friendship that went much deeper. When I asked “what exactly is it that makes this relationship so tight?” she replied:

“It’s the bonding, the sharing that makes it this tight. Myself, Martha, William, Anna and Molly<sup>45</sup>, we’re becoming like a family; even if one of us want to leave the NGO, if we have to get a job, we have to stick together. So ahm, if I should get a job separate from the NGO and Martha and they should still be here, even if I was to pack in a shelf at Shoprite I will always think of the NGO. It’s like I just can’t get away from the love for each other and the love for what you do, it’s like there’s no way out, you can’t escape from it because (laughing) because you always wanna come back. It’s like that sometimes in the weekends, we would really miss each other, miss seeing each other to an extent that we can’t wait till Monday so that we can make each other’s day, it’s like family” (Interview with Lee 21.06.2004).

Martha and the three volunteers (viz. Lee, Anna and William) became very emotional during the interview when we spoke about friendship. Martha’s eyes were sparkling; she was speaking fast, she emphasized important words, and she emphasized how important her friends in the NGO have become to her:

“I’ve really got closer to some of the people here at the NGO and... I will *not* trade them for anything and I’m serious when I say that ahm, how can I say it’s, when I’m here with them I don’t wanna leave and when I don’t see them I miss them like *crazy* (...) I need to see them, we have really grown *close* as a family, it’s like we’re brothers and sisters and, it’s like you can’t take us apart even if I must get a, I mean that’s not gonna happen because I don’t see myself getting away from, from this place anytime soon. If things changed man, if things take a u-turn and stuff and I land up in some bank, I don’t, I don’t think I will survive. I will still not leave them. Even if I must go wherever, they will

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<sup>45</sup> Molly is a volunteer in the Life Skills programme but was not interviewed in this study.

not leave my *heart*, seriously I will *die* for these people. I will put my *life* on a line for them and I'm serious when I'm saying that. I'm telling you that these people are like family to me (out breath and a big smile)" (Interview with Martha 20.06.2004).

Anna had only been in the NGO for some months when I interviewed her. Nevertheless, in that short time she had built a tight relationship with some of the volunteers. We did not speak so much about this friendship in the interview, but the questionnaire and some of the observations I recorded in respect of Anna, with regard to which of the volunteers she spent time with and how they responded to her, echoed Martha's words in the quotation above. In our interview, Anna said:

"My relationship with them is like we are like brothers and sisters, and I will never give it up on them (...) when I'm praying, I'm not praying for God or just for me, but I am praying for the people in the organisation, cause they are very, very important to me (big smile)" (Interview with Anna 21.06.2004).

William, the only young man in this clique of four, also expressing his love and affection towards the other volunteers, as well as emphasizing the close relationships they have formed with each other, although he did not mention the clique as specifically as the others:

"My relationship with NGO... it's a very tight relationship man. You know that it's *love*. No matter what people say to you, if they try to, to drop your self-esteem, I will like, I'm here to motivate you that you *can* do it. Like I normally, like I *always* say to Martha and them, you can *do it*, just put your back into it (...) we're like one big, happy family. Ok, we have our downfalls but still no relationship is perfect (laughing)" (Interview with William 17.06.2004).

### **The Relationship between the Manager and the Volunteers**

Through several observations and conversations with the volunteers, the Manager and staff members, it emerged that the Manager plays a very important role in some of the

volunteers' lives. In Linda's opinion, the Manager is important to the volunteers because:

"I think he is a mentor to them, he is a father to them, he is a constructor, he is a *teacher*, he is... a *friend*... and he is... really *a lot* to many of them, and they, because of his personality and because of the fact that you can access him easily, like just go in and speak to him, so he is there for them. Many people have confided in him, and that makes it, that is how they *see* him, and also the fact that they *respect* him as the Manager ahm, I don't think any of them have ever been disrespectful towards him, and you'll always see, how they all... how everybody in the office will always try to please him" (Interview with Linda 15.06.2004).

I was invited to activities, which the Manager organised for some of the volunteers outside office hours, such as a fishing trip. This confirmed my initial perception of the positive relationship between the Manager and the volunteers. However, it did seem as though this special relationship was not as strong for all the volunteers, especially not for the young female volunteers. Although I had never heard a bad word about the Manager, I was curious to see whether the interviews would bring to light more nuanced information about him and his relationships with the volunteers. I decided not to start talking about the Manager in the interviews, but only to start probing if the volunteers mentioned him. On the one hand, this was to avoid leading questions and to see who first spoke about him. On the other hand, it could be argued that I might have lost valuable information if the interview had not proceeded in a style that made it natural to talk about the Manager. However, I feel that it was sufficient for me to ask open-ended questions during the interviews and it seems to me that those who did speak about the Manager and their relationship were those volunteers to whom the Manager really was very important. This applied particularly to William and Andy.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Maria and Linda, the only female volunteers who talked a lot about the Manager in the interviews, could also have been given more space in this section. When I choose not to do so, it is because they spoke very positively about the Manager in general, and not by describing a particular relationship, such as William and Andy did.

“For me in the NGO it’s first of all the Manager. He is like, you can say he is my, my role model. Because why; he is a kind of person, a kind of person who will create opportunities for you, man. He will create opportunities, like last year, when we went overseas (...) if there’s a problem at work, he’ll sit and sort it like no matter what, he will not stress out, you know, he’ll sort it out there and he also says things as it is, and, ehm, if you share a problem with him he will like come and motivate you or if you have like a downfall somewhere and he will like motivate you and (clears his throat) that that is why I, I *admire* the Manager so much” (Interview with William 17.06.2004).

Like William, Andy feels very close to the Manager and reports having a very positive relationship with the NGO as a whole. Andy differs from William, though, in that he does not belong to the clique. In the social network map, Andy drew a link to only one other person (except for the Manager) who was close to him, viz. Anna. He spoke of her as a sister whom he had to protect, but also as a colleague whom he deeply respected and with whom he had a very enjoyable time. His relationship with the NGO was highlighted above, when I discussed the volunteers’ personal development. Now, though, I will present some of the positive things Andy said about the Manager:

“When I, I’m emotionally destroyed or, you know, when I’m not feeling well, I can talk to him, you know, I can talk to him as a friend. And if I need to, money wise, when I’m broke, you know... I can go to him and say; things are not going well... at home and stuff like that man. He is just there when you need him. It’s very good, he’s a very good person” (Interview with Andy 10.06.2004).

I noticed that it was only the young male volunteers who took part in the after office activities, and that it was more often them than the young female volunteers who were in his office or talking with him in general. When I pointed this out, the Manager said that he was aware of it and that he wished that there was a woman in the organisation who could play a similar role for the female volunteers, as he did for the male volunteers. I have never thought of the Manager as being gender conservative and he claims him self not to be, so I wondered why he could not relate equally easily to the

male and the female volunteers. Nevertheless, I do understand his thoughts about male bonding and female bonding, and the fact that he cannot spend all his spare time with the volunteers, even though he would like to do so. When I asked him why he spent so much time with some of them after hours, he responded:

“Why do I want to do it? I think... young people, we have an opportunity to shape young people’s lives I think we live in a challenging... *country* ahm with so much crime and so much unemployment and so much of *negative* things and I, I think that the *positive* things that happened in *my* life, there *must* be something positive that can come out and I know that there *are*. So for me to be able to... take *one* person that have previously been involved in gangsterism, has recently been in problems with the *law* and are currently... *not* involved in those things because of the matter of fact he doesn’t have the *time* for one. During the day they are involved with the NGO and in the weekends we also get them to do something else, you know so it’s almost limited time, and I think showing that there *is* somebody, maybe other than their parents who also *do* care. I think that’s playing an important role” (Interview with the Manager 22.06.2004).

Once, in a conversation with Linda, she told me about how vital the Manager was for many of the volunteers. I regarded her insight as very interesting, as she knows most of the volunteers and the Manager very well. At another time, I heard her say to a volunteer, “You are drifting and you must take control of your life.” Later I asked Linda more about this and she said:

“If the Manager decides not to do this anymore or if he dies or something, what do you think these young people will do? Will they go back to the streets? Many of them are dependent on him. You will see that. If they did not have this organisation, they will not have much” (Personal conversation with Linda 20.04.2003).

Linda’s statement does not apply to all the volunteers, but as the quotations and discussions above have shown, the Manager does play a very important role for many of them. Even if the majority of the volunteers do not have a very close personal

relationship with him, the opportunities he creates by simply being the person he is, cannot be underestimated. To me it seems that those most closely connected to the Manager are William and Andy, but he does seem to be vital for much of the commitment, development and joy that the other volunteers experience in the NGO as well. An entire dissertation could have been written about the relationship between the volunteers and the Manager of the NGO, but due to space limitations, the above must suffice.

### **A Positive Relationship with the NGO**

The majority of the volunteers, viz. Linda, Steve, Melanie, Maria, Charles and Andy have a positive relationship with the NGO in general. They have friends in the NGO, although these are not necessarily their best friends. Most of them do feel that the NGO is like a family to them, but – unlike the group I first discussed in this section – they do not mind having some time apart on the weekend. Like the others, they also love their work, but their work is more important to their wellbeing in the organisation than is having very, very close social relationships with the other volunteers. With regard to the clique discussed earlier, their particularly positive relationship with the NGO seems to result from a combination of their love for the work and their very close personal friendships.

### **A Negative Relationship with the NGO**

Although the majority of the volunteers have a positive relationship with the NGO, Lenny is a volunteer who has a rather negative relationship with this organisation:

“It has always been bumpy. People don’t trust you and if you make a suggestion they rise up against you because the group, the *team* usually decides, that’s why I always stood as an individual, I enjoyed that. I keep my nose clean so that nobody can say things about me (...) how can I say; they try to make you feel inferior in all occasions whereas your opinion doesn’t count, you’re just a soldier you’re supposed to be, they dictate and you are supposed to obey even though you know in your heart it’s wrong” (Interview with Lenny 19.06.2004).



to obey even though you know in your heart it's wrong" (Interview with Lenny 19.06.2004).

Lenny views himself as an individualist and, as he stated in the interview and the questionnaire, and as I learnt through many observations and conversations, he has not formed any special relationship with the NGO or the staff/volunteers. Lenny was present at the important meetings and sessions that I observed, and he took his role in the Life Skills programme seriously. He is very popular amongst the children and always spoke of them positively. During the week, if nothing in particular was happening, he often showed up when it suited him, explaining: "I don't wanna hang around here doing nothing when there's plenty of other things I can do" (personal conversation with Lenny, undated). He had friends in another programme, but did not have any good friends amongst those interviewed in this study. From time to time, I overheard the others talking negatively about him or his many ideas and projects. Once, when I discussed this with the Manager, he said that he was aware of it but also understood the other volunteers. He explained that Lenny was very talented in many ways and that he did not care what other people thought of him. This can be very provocative for the others, he said. I had many conversations with Lenny and the other volunteers, and in conclusion, I was able to understand both sides of the story. In response to Lenny's rather negative description of the NGO, I became curious and asked him why he had been involved in the NGO for such a long time (3 years):

"The young people that I, I have to speak to everyday, the *young* people that I challenge, the young people out there that I have to work with... the teenagers that I have to motivate, to counsel, ya, it's all about the young people, it's not about myself, I can take the challenges I can take the blows (...) It would be senseless of me to drop out because I can take the pace (...) so that's why I, I did it all because I had to complete something (...) it's just my purpose. It's no two ways about it, but I am, I am confident that it *is*. I can't question something that is natural from, from inside. I can't quite explain... but I'm doing these things out of *love*" (Interview with Lenny 19.06.2003).

In conclusion, then, and to summarise the various motivations very briefly, the following four components seem to be very important for the volunteers:

- the important role played by the manager in keeping them in the organisation, even though he might not have been the initial motivation for them to start volunteering
- the positive relationship all, except one volunteer, have with the NGO.

In the next section, I will draw attention to the work of Clary et al, with regard to a concept they called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (1992), which was developed for use in research on volunteers.

## Motivations in the Light of a Functional Strategy

Clary et al (1992) developed an instrument they called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) to analyse volunteer's motivations. The Inventory consists of 30 reasons one might have for volunteering.<sup>47</sup> In respect of each statement, respondents are required to indicate their response on a scale from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important). For each individual, six scores are calculated that correspond to six different motivations that can be satisfied by volunteering. Each motivation is assessed by five reasons on the inventory. The research team's empirical selection consisted of almost 1000 current volunteers as well as 500 university students, so the study should have generated enough material.<sup>48</sup> Even though my study consisted of 12 respondents only, it was a descriptive study, I did not use the same statements as Clary et al, and although it is 14 years old, I nonetheless found their survey to be very useful;

Gil Clary and Mark Snyder (1992) advise, for instance, that being a volunteer can provide opportunities for a person to meet various psychological and social needs:

"A functional analysis is concerned with the personal and social motives, needs, goals and functions that are served by an individual's beliefs and actions" (ibid: 335).

Lorentzen and Rognstad (1994: 17) acknowledge Clary et al for creating an empirical

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<sup>47</sup> According to Clary et al, the choice of the items listed in the VFI was guided by theoretical considerations. Clary and Snyder (1991) analyzed the empirical research on volunteerism and identified a set of primary functions (1992: 337).

<sup>48</sup> Clary et al report that the items all have internal consistency coefficients greater than or equal to .80. There is also significant test-retest reliabilities with all correlations greater than .60

“A functional analysis is concerned with the personal and social motives, needs, goals and functions that are served by an individual’s beliefs and actions” (ibid: 335). Lorentzen and Rognstad (1994: 17) acknowledge Clary et al for creating an empirical instrument that can be used to map out an individual’s reasons for volunteering. They argue, however, that if the voluntary work is to be explained, the individual’s motivations have to be seen in the light of a) characteristics of the individual’s life situation and b) qualities of the organisation where the individual volunteers. If not, the study would be lacking a context. Cole (2004: 1) says that their “functional approach” for studying motivation applies to volunteers in high-risk communities because it relates the individual’s psychological functions to his/her experiences, current life situation and stage of development. As I am writing about volunteers in a high-risk community, Cole’s statement supports my reason for using the VFI. Clary et al constructed a series of questions to examine 6 underlying dimensions, which summarise the reasons for voluntary work. These six dimensions or so-called Primary Functions of Motivation are the following: (Clary et al 1992: 337-338):

❖ Social

Voluntary work allows interaction and cooperation. People volunteer because it is expected by relevant others and because doing so fulfils their need to behave in socially desired ways.

❖ Value

It allows people to act on deeply held beliefs about the importance of helping others (often referred to as altruism).

❖ Career

It allows people to explore job opportunities and introduces them to potential career contacts.

❖ Understanding

It satisfies the desire to understand the people whom one serves, the organisation for whom one volunteers, and even oneself.

#### ❖ Esteem

It enhances a person's feeling of being needed and important. The person already feels good about him- or herself, but volunteers in order to feel even better.

The VFI is a functional analysis concerned with the personal and social motives, needs, goals, and functions that are served by an individual's belief and actions. The researchers, Clary et al, were seeking to identify and understand the needs and motivations that volunteers seek to satisfy through their volunteer work. This can be formulated as the question: "What functions are served when a person volunteers?" (Clary et al 1992: 334-335).

As we have also seen in this present study, persons may have the same attitude or perform the same behaviour for very different reasons. Performance of volunteerism that, on the surface, appears to be identical, may in reality reflect different underlying motivational processes. Knowing this can help NGO's to understand better what people want when they think about volunteering and what can be done to satisfy their needs (ibid: 335). As has been shown in my study, volunteering is multi-motivational in nature. One single volunteer may have many motivations for doing the same job; moreover, these may change over a short time. Melanie and Linda, for example, started working as administrative volunteers, but soon became interested in doing something more 'people related'. Consequently, Melanie is now solely working directly with the users of the NGO's interventions, whereas Linda is working on both administrative and people related tasks. For William, the motivations are related to the actual work he is doing with the children, his friends in the NGO and the Manager. The VFI is useful, in that it recognises that there are several motivations operating at the same time and that it measures many motivations at once. Knowing that several functions can coexist and underlie volunteering, it may be unpractical and unrealistic to single out just one function; I have thus followed their approach in my study. Clary et al argue, furthermore, that young people are often motivated by career concerns. As mentioned, though, it was only Melanie who explicitly reported this as her main reason to volunteer; another 7 volunteers agreed that they were also motivated by the realisation that it would be easier for them to find good employment

concerns. As mentioned, though, it was only Melanie who explicitly reported this as her main reason to volunteer; another 7 volunteers agreed that they were also motivated by the realisation that it would be easier for them to find good employment once they had gained job experience by volunteering. This indicates that there may be multiple motivations involved at any one time.

Just as the volunteers have multiple motivations for volunteering, the NGO serves multiple functions in its surroundings. Firstly, the main purpose of the NGO is to offer services to underprivileged groups in the area, which it does by intervening in schools, places of safety and health clinics. Secondly, another aim of the NGO is to be supportive of its volunteers. This is examined and exemplified in this study, guided by the first and second research questions, which dealt with the relationship that the volunteers have with the NGO and what impact the NGO is having on their personal development. When looking at the most extreme pre-volunteer behaviour amongst the volunteers, their present engagement in the NGO's activities is clearly better for these volunteers, their families and the community where they live. The support from the NGO also plays an important role, especially with regard to their career opportunities.

There is an interesting paradox, which is familiar to all students of human behaviour: people's actions often fall short of their intentions, beliefs and values (Clary et al 1992: 341). Not only has this happened to me, but I have observed it amongst the volunteers as well. In one session held at a school for example, one of the volunteers spoke about respect and role models. He asked the children if they would have respect for him if he were talking to them about staying off alcohol one day, and the next they saw him drunk in the streets. As they were the good pupils, they said no. Most of the volunteers are involved in sessions about "living a positive lifestyle", where they talk about the disadvantages of using drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, sleeping around and other issues. One could easily criticise those volunteers who are 'talking the talk but not walking the walk'. But, taking into consideration the problems some of them have had with drugs and alcohol, the little amount (they say) they are consuming today, and the way they have managed to change their lives, their current behaviour is nothing but impressive. In addition, as I have shown, the NGO continues to play an important role in this and in their personal development in general.

I would now like to answer the question “What functions are served when a person volunteers?” This part is where the VFI approach is used on the volunteers in my study. The Clary et al system lists 6 motivations, and the table below shows which of these motivations are applicable to the volunteers in this study, based on the information presented in this chapter.

Table 5. Clary et al’s Volunteer’s Functions Inventory applied to my study:

Volunteer	Social*	Value	Career	Understanding	Protective	Esteem
Andy		X				
Anna		X				
Charles		X				
Lee		X				
Lenny		X				
Linda		X				
Maria			X**			
Martha		X				
Melanie			X			
Steve		X				
William		X				

\* Reminder to the reader: The VFI’s use of social does not mean ‘social benefits’, which explains why none of the volunteers ticked this motivation.

\*\* Maria’s main motivation is not solely career related, but the most applicable of these 6 motivations.

The fact that I did not use the VFI when obtaining my data, but only when analysing it, is of course a disadvantage when trying to fit the volunteers of my study into this system. The categories into which I have placed them are not as accurate as would have been the case had I used the VFI instead of my questionnaire. Nevertheless, it does show that the VFI is applicable to the motivations I have found, and that my study can make use of previously invented instruments for research on volunteering.

### **A Table of the NGO’s Volunteers’ Motivations**

Based on all the information about the volunteers presented in this dissertation, I have made a table that summarises the volunteers’ motivation in my study. Although the VFI discussed above was useful in some respects, it did not reflect all the different reasons reported by the volunteers in my study. In a table I have developed, the column “social” refers to the social benefits gained from volunteering (Østerås 2002), and it includes social ties to other volunteers and/or the Manager. I also included a

column for “personal development” and one for “love for the work”. Career and value are retained, as in the original VFI table. The volunteers in my study thus appear to be motivated as seen shortly.

Table 6. The NGO’s volunteers motivations:

Volunteer	Social Benefits	Value	Career	Personal Development	Love for the work
Andy	X	X		X	X
Anna	X	X		X	X
Charles		X			X
Lee	X	X		X	X
Lenny		X			X
Linda		X			X
Maria				X	X
Martha	X	X		X	X
Melanie	X <sup>49</sup>		X	X	X
Steve		X		X	X
William	X	X		X	X

## Other studies of Volunteers’ Motivations

In the American social sciences of the 1960’s, two main debates about volunteerism occurred. They were based on two pieces of work: Olson’s *The Logic of Collective Action* (1964) and Clark and Wilson’s *Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations* (1961) (in Rognstad and Lorentzen 1994). These and other debates will not be elaborated upon here, however, because I would prefer to focus on studies that are closer to mine in time and findings. According to Østeraas (2002), research has shown that the social benefits gained from volunteering are often the main motivation. Although Østeraas studied Norwegian volunteers, his finding seems to be relevant for my study, as the majority talked about gaining social benefits from volunteering for the NGO. However, this is not the only motivational factor.

In a study done in 1998, Deborah L. Cole found that there does not appear to be any one motivational reason for volunteering (in Cole 2004). People do volunteer work for

<sup>49</sup> Although Melanie’s main motivation for volunteering was to help her career, the social benefits seem to be an important motivation for her to continue volunteering

different reasons, but in her most recent study (2004), she found that for volunteers from high-risk communities, values play the biggest role in motivating an individual volunteer. This is also the main finding in a Norwegian study of 1994, although this study did not segregate high- and low-risk communities (Rognstad and Lorentzen 1994). The value motivation is also very applicable to the findings in my study. The VFI statement “I feel compassion toward people in need” seems to be applicable for all the volunteers and perhaps especially for those of the volunteers who have been in similar difficult situations as the children with whom they are working. Cole’s study, which was a comparable one in the sense that it studied volunteers in high-risk and low-risk communities, found that stipends and job/career skills are of greater importance for low-risk audiences (2004). Although I have not done a comparison with a low-risk community, Cole’s findings might also apply to the volunteers in my study, as only one of them reported career as being the main motivation for volunteering. She acknowledges, amongst other things, the following as being high-risk community indicators: availability of drugs and firearms, media portrayals of violence, low community attachment and disorganisation, and extreme economic deprivation. As presented in the introduction, these factors are clearly applicable to the Cape Flats, which is another reason why I find her study interesting. Its drawbacks are that it is not a South African study and that it was conducted on adults, not adolescents. Brown (1998: 51) says that a number of researchers agree that the global characteristics of neighbourhood socio-economic status have a large impact on voluntarism. Finding reasons for this, says Brown, is not that easy. Economy places a role, but not everything can be explained by poverty.

All the volunteers in my study spoke very positively about the work they were doing, and all of them talked about the love for the children, how they wanted to make a positive impact on them, and how they were building good relationships. In an American survey, Brown (1998) calls this bonding with the children and states that it might be a by-product of the act of giving rather than an initial aim. What Melanie said in her interview (10.06.2004) about the children giving her new energy seems to be a by-product for the other volunteers too. This concludes the present chapter; in the next, I will present the conclusions of the study.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation, titled “A study of young volunteers and volunteering in a Cape Town based international NGO” asks what is it that motivates a group of young people from a so-called disadvantaged community, to volunteer fulltime for an NGO in their local area. I have attempted to answer this question in this research study, in the field of development studies and social transformation. To do so, I used a number of data collecting methods, based on qualitative research principles and methods. Although the data I have collected herein was obviously interpreted by me in my analyses, I have tried my best to portray the volunteers’ own voices and opinions as these were presented to me through observation, interviews, questionnaire, personal conversations and social network maps.

There is seldom, if ever, one single answer that applies and is valid for all people when it comes to analysing human behaviour and ascertaining the reasons for such behaviour. This is also true in this study about young volunteers in a particular NGO on the Cape Flats. As I have emphasized in my findings, the motivations of the volunteers are clearly varied and have also changed over time. For those volunteers who did not appear to have any specific reason or motivation when they first started volunteering, this changed once they began to immerse themselves in their work at the NGO. When I interviewed them for this study, each of them spoke about several factors that were motivating them to continue volunteering at the NGO. I have tried to identify the most important motivational factors for the majority of the volunteers. These are:

- Social benefits
- Personal development
- Value based motivations
- Love for the work

I will briefly discuss each of these in turn below.

- Social benefits

The concept of social benefits is used to indicate that, amongst other things, the volunteers are motivated by meeting interesting people, which they often do at various meetings, training sessions, camps and other events. Interesting people are people who can teach them new skills, give them ideas to reflect upon and highlight aspects of problems that differ from what the volunteers are thinking about. These kinds of social benefits provide a general motivation. It becomes more specific, when one realises that some of the volunteers have developed very close friendships with each other, and that they thus have their best friends in the NGO. Two of the volunteers, for instance, have developed a very close relationship with the Manager, who is a very important person for the NGO in general and for the volunteers in particular. Other social benefits are related to the following two statements: "It is like a family" and "You can take me out of the NGO, but you cannot take the NGO out of me." The majority of the volunteers responded that the NGO was 'in their blood'. They felt very attached to it and thus relied on it as a place where they could come and meet friends, and to get support if they were upset or depressed. The NGO was also a place where they would be given challenging things to do, which made them feel good about what they were doing. This motivation can be related to the next motivation: personal development.

- Personal development

The motivation of personal development arose relatively early in the data collecting phase, although at that stage it had not yet been framed as personal development. I was not sure what it was at first, but I soon heard how the volunteers were expressing their gratitude towards the NGO and how they talked about all the things they had learned, ranging from computer skills to holding sessions about various topics and talking in front of 300 children. Less concrete, but perhaps even more important information about personal development was expressed when the volunteers spoke about how their self-esteem and confidence had increased after volunteering for the organisation. Although it is hard to measure self-esteem and confidence scientifically, these aspects of motivation should not be ignored because of this difficulty. On the extreme end of the scale there was one volunteer who said that he would have been dead if it had not been for the NGO, and at the other extreme was another volunteer

who felt that the NGO was breaking him down in a negative sense. Apart from these two, the majority reported that the NGO was having a positive impact on their personal development and that they felt they had grown as human beings as a result of volunteering.

- Value based motivations

Included in this motivation is the wish of the volunteers to do something for less fortunate people, in particular for children, who are believed to be in great need of protection and support in a sometimes very harsh environment and community. Although the volunteers might not be fortunate in terms of finances or education, they do feel fortunate in terms of experiences, for example, and they want to share this with children. They share both positive and negative experiences with the children, and try to impress on them how important it is to make the best of any situation. When talking about this, the volunteers often expressed a strong wish to make a difference for at least one child, and that this would have fulfilled what many of them referred to as their purpose in life. Although religion is important to the volunteers, only one explicitly gave religion as a motivation for volunteering. Nonetheless, strong desire of all of the volunteers to be a positive influence on their communities is an indirect expression of the religious principle of loving your neighbour, even if they do not refer to it as such.

- Love for the work

All the volunteers reported that volunteering made them feel good. Consequently, and not surprisingly, all of them also reported that they loved the work they were doing. Although it could sometimes be hard and frustrating, all of them talked about the sessions, camps, launches and meetings with great enthusiasm. The Life Skills programme with which the volunteers I studied herein were involved when this study was conducted, allowed for the volunteers to be engaged in different types of events, such as formal meetings with the schools, sessions with other volunteers and children and camps for selected groups of children. The variety of activities and the close contact with the children were very important in influencing why the volunteers loved their work so passionately. The positive feedback they receive from the children

appears to be what makes the volunteers feel good, which adds to the positive nature of the experience and makes them so enthusiastic about their work.

In conclusion, then, it emerged from my study that there is no single, commonly shared factor that motivates young people to become volunteers. Moreover, their motivations might change over time too. Therefore, as I have found with regard to the group of young people who participated in this study, it is important for NGOs to communicate well with their volunteers in order to find out what motivates each individual, and to try their utmost to accommodate these motivations. In this way, it is more likely that the volunteers will remain in the NGO for a longer period of time, that they will be more dedicated, and that they will develop skills which are not only important to them, but which can also have a positive impact on their local communities.

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## Appendix 1.

### Employment and Race in Cape Town

Although these numbers are 8 years, they can still give an idea of the employment and 'race' situation in the city at the time. A study conducted by the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town in conjunction with University of Michigan, shows that only 56% of 18 year old African matriculants believe they have a good chance of landing a job within 3 years, as compared to 85% of their white and 78% of their coloured counterparts (Merten 2005a). In the Western Cape, the unemployment rate is 26.1%. Just more than half, or 320 000, are coloured, while Africans account for 41% of those without jobs and 6% are white (Merten 2005b).

#### Employment Status

Category	Percentage
Economically active who are unemployed	22%
• Coloured females	22%
• Coloured males	18%
• Black females	50%
• Black males	33%
• Indian females	9%
• Indian males	17%
• White females	6%
• White males	5%
Scholars/Full-time students	18%
Pensioners/Retired persons	6%

Source: "A Socio-Economic Profile of the Cape Metropolitan Area" by the Cape Metropolitan Council, based on the Population Census conducted by SA Stats in October 1996

#### Ethnic Group Median Income (Rands per annum)

Ethnic Group	Median Income in Rands per annum
White	48 000
Asian	24 000
Coloured	15 000
Black	4 200
Total	15 000

Source: *Ibid*

#### Employment breakdown by population group - community profile

	Asian	Black	Coloured	White
Employed	13 408	182 633	427 689	245 481
Unemployed, looking for work	1 590	110 791	91 843	10 522
Total	14 998	293 424	519 532	256 003
Total percentage	1%	27%	48%	24%

## Appendix 2.

### Comparison of Crime on the Cape Flats and in Sea Point

The numbers in % shows the percentage of total cases in the Western Cape Province occurring on the Cape Flats and in Sea Point. Sea Point is historically a “white” area.

Crime	Total reported cases in the Western Cape	Cases reported on the Cape Flats		Cases reported in Sea Point	
Rape	6,315	226	3.6%	22	0.3%
Murder	2,839	82	2.9%	4	0.1%
Illegal possession of firearms	1,912	163	2.9%	8	0.4%
Drug-related crime	19,940	829	4.2%	307	1.5%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	13,855	1308	9.5%	102	0.7%
Neglect and ill treatment of children	1,762	149	8.5%	3	0.2%

This table is based on 2004 statistics from South African Police Service available [http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/\\_pdf/western\\_cape](http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/_pdf/western_cape)

For further details on Sea Point, see [http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/\\_pdf/western\\_cape/west\\_metropole/sea\\_point.pdf](http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/_pdf/western_cape/west_metropole/sea_point.pdf)

For further details on Western Cape, see [http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/\\_pdf/western\\_cape/provincial\\_total.pdf](http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/_pdf/western_cape/provincial_total.pdf)

### **Appendix 3.**

#### **Interview Guide**

1. Do you have any questions before we start?
2. What did you do before you started volunteering for the NGO?
3. In the social network map... (question modified regarding the volunteers' individual drawing of their social network map)
4. I have heard some people say the NGO is like a family. What do you think about this?
5. I have also heard the saying that "You can take me out of the NGO, but you can never take the NGO out of me". Have you heard this saying? What does it mean to you?
6. If I asked your mother if she had noticed any changes about you, as the person you are now compared to before you started volunteering, what do you think she would say?
7. What, if any, changes have you noticed about yourself after you started volunteering for the NGO?
8. What is it that you enjoy most about being a volunteer for this organisation?
9. That was my last question. Is there anything you would like to say before we end this interview?

Thank you very much

## Appendix 6.

### Definitions of Codes

This table might be confusing for the reader, but the codes and the system are developed to make sense to me in the coding process.

General Categories and Sub Categories	Definitions of Codes	Links
<b><u>Motivation</u></b>	Reasons given by one or more volunteers (V) regarding why they are volunteering for the NGO	CRQ
Drive inside	V can't really explain it but they have this drive	CRQ
Thrill	V can't really explain it but they have this thrill inside	CRQ
MO	V experiences a moral obligation	CRQ
Love	V loves working with the children/adolescents	CRQ
Purpose	V states that he/she is meant to do this job, and that it's a life purpose	CRQ
BC	V feels that he/she must give back to the community	CRQ
Reward	Andy, line 439 "I know I will be rewarded"	CQR
FG	V reports that it feels good to volunteer	CQR
MAD	V wishes to make a difference in other people's lives	CRQ II3a,b
God	God in Christianity. What role does God have in V lives, how and to what extent does God motivates them	CRQ
MIP	V says that meeting interesting people/new friends is motivational	
<b><u>Before</u></b>	Any aspects V describe from their lives before volunteering and early in their career as V	IIIa
Gangs	V describes gang-relations, gang activities or fear of gangs	IIIa
'Bad boy'	V describes destructive behaviour/attitude	IIIa
Lost friends	V mentions friends of V who are dead	IIIa
<b><u>Achievements from volunteering</u></b>		
Knowledge	Knowledge about various issues the V has gained from volunteering	TQ3 II3b
<b><u>WMUC</u></b>	What made the V change from the life he/she used to live?	
<b><u>PD</u></b>	Personal development V report to have gained after volunteering	TQ2 II2a,b
Emotional	Emotional growth, including greater self-esteem, being able to trust other people	II2a,b
Intellectual	Intellectual skills	II2a,b
Social	Social relations to other people, including facilitation skills, being a leader, role model, help people, making friends	II2a,b

<sup>61</sup> Although the Manager and I communicated very well and often, he was very reluctant to sit down and agree to a formal interview. When we finally did so, however, it went very well.

Practical	Things V has learned at the NGO such as computer skills	II2a,b
<b>PE</b>	Personal experience, V for instance uses his/her PE when working with children	II2a TQ2
<b>Manager</b>	The NGO's Manager. What relationship does V have to him, what does V think of him, what does the Manager mean to V	TQ1 IIIb,c
RM	V says he is a role model to them	TQ1 IIIb,c
AWL	Manager has shown V another and better way of life	TQ1 IIIb,c
OD	V says he has an open door policy and he is there when they need him, no matter what it is	TQ1 IIIb,c
CO	V says he creates opportunities, is not 'at your back'	TQ1 IIIb,c
<b>NGO+</b>	Positive aspects with the NGO reported by V	TQ1 IIIc
Life change	Experiences from the time in NGO that V refers to as life changing	TQ2 II2a
<b>NGO-</b>	Negative aspects with the NGO reported by V	TQ1
V & staff	Negative relationship between staff and V	TQ1
Mistrust	Any situation/experience where the V feels he/she cannot trust other people in the NGO, feels he was put down	TQ1
Single Codes that had no directly connection with other codes or TQ's:		
<b>Me</b>	V refers to him/herself as a special person	
<b>Enjoy</b>	What V says he/she enjoys/likes about being a volunteer	
<b>Area</b>	What V says about the area where he/she lives and volunteers	
<b>Nina</b>	Whatever the V says about me (useful when writing about our relationship)	
<b>Reflection</b>	Thoughts and reflection expressed by V which does not fall under any of the codes	

**Appendix 7.**  
**Questionnaire**

## **Questionnaire for the Volunteers in the Life Skills 2004 Programme**

This questionnaire consists of 9 sections covering different topics related to the Life Skills Programme and the volunteers. Instructions will follow for each section on how to fill in your answers. Please answer as precisely as you can. Take your time.

## 1. Personal

1a) Full name \_\_\_\_\_

1b) Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

1c) Address \_\_\_\_\_

### 1d) Marital status

Please put an X in the box most appropriate for you

I am single	I am married	I have a boyfriend
I have a girlfriend	I am engaged	I am divorced

1e) I live with (specify who, for example mother, father, how many sisters, brothers etc)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 1f) Type of accommodation

Please put an X on the line most appropriate for you

I live in a house my family owns \_\_\_\_\_ I live in a flat my family owns \_\_\_\_\_

I live in a house my family rents \_\_\_\_\_ I live in a flat my family rents \_\_\_\_\_

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 1g) Your parents

They are married \_\_\_\_\_ They live together but are not married \_\_\_\_\_

They are divorced \_\_\_\_\_ They were never married \_\_\_\_\_

I have never known my mother \_\_\_\_\_ I have never known my father \_\_\_\_\_

My mother is a widow \_\_\_\_\_ My father is a widower \_\_\_\_\_

My mother and my father are dead \_\_\_\_\_

I was not raised by any of my parents but by (specify who) \_\_\_\_\_



## 1h) Religion

Please put an X in the box most appropriate for you

I am a Muslim	Christian	Hindu	Jew
Buddhist	Atheist	Agnostics	Other, specify

## 2. You and the NGO

### 2a) How did you hear about the NGO?

From friends\_\_ family\_\_ advertisements\_\_ a teacher\_\_ the NGO itself\_\_  
Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

### 2b) When did you hear about the NGO? (be as precise as you can on month and year)

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2c) When did you start volunteering for the NGO? (date, month, year)

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2d) Do you have a contract with the NGO?

yes \_\_ no \_\_ I don't know \_\_

### 2e) Please put an X on the line most appropriate for you on this statement:

Having a contract is very important to me

Strongly agree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Neutral\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Strongly disagree\_\_

### 2f) If you don't have a contract or don't know if you have one, go to question 2h.

If you have a contract, please answer the following:

My contract started at \_\_\_\_\_ and ends at \_\_\_\_\_ I don't remember \_\_

(Give dates and your role regarding all contracts if you have had or have more than one)

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2g) Who signed the contract/s?

\_\_\_\_\_

**2h)** Have you ever got money from the NGO?

no \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_

If you answered no on 2h, go to question 2j

If you answered yes, please put an X on the line most appropriate for you

**2i)** I get my regular income from the NGO \_\_\_

The amount is \_\_\_\_\_ pr. month (be as precise as possible)

I get a stipend from the NGO \_\_\_

How often \_\_\_\_\_

The amount is/has been \_\_\_\_\_

I expect to get more money from the NGO: yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_

**2j)** Your education and work experience

**2ja)** Which primary school/s did you go to?

Did you complete primary school? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

If no, what grade did you last complete?

\_\_\_\_\_

**2jb)** Which high school/s did you go to?

Did you complete high school? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

If no, what grade did you last complete?

\_\_\_\_\_

**2jc)** Have you ever studied at a university? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

Do you want to study at a university? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

**2jd)** Have you ever had a paid job for more than 2 months? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

Do you have a paid job at the moment? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

What kind of job is this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2jf)** Have you ever volunteered for another organisation? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

If yes, please specify name of organisation/s

\_\_\_\_\_

**2jg)** When looking at the future, for how long do you see yourself involved with the NGO? \_\_\_\_\_

**2jh)** Do you come to and leave the office at the same time every day?  
yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_

**2ji)** How many hours do you spend on volunteering for the NGO per day?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2jj)** How many hours do you spend on the Life Skills programme per week?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **3. You, your position and what you are doing at the NGO**

**3a)** What is your current role/position in the NGO? (you can tick more than one)

Life Skills volunteer \_\_\_ senior volunteer \_\_\_ Love Life volunteer \_\_\_  
Love Life groundbreaker \_\_\_ other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**3b)** Are you happy with your current role/position?

Yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ neutral \_\_\_

**3c)** What, if any, other role/position in the NGO would you like to have?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3d)** Why would you like to have this role/position?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3e)** In which school/s are you involved at the moment or will be involved within the next two weeks?

Primary school/s (name of school/s) \_\_\_\_\_

High schools/s (name of school/s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3f)** What are your responsibilities in the role/position you have at the NGO?  
(continue on the back of this page if you want to)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. In this section the questions are about why you wanted to be a volunteer

What is your main reason for being a volunteer?

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Please circle the number most appropriate for you after each statement. The numbers indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement

1 = strongly agree

4 = disagree

2 = agree

5 = strongly disagree

3 = neutral

It makes me feel good about my self	1	2	3	4	5
It will make it easier for me to get a job	1	2	3	4	5
It will look good on my CV	1	2	3	4	5
I will meet new friends	1	2	3	4	5
I will meet interesting people	1	2	3	4	5
I will get stuff such as clothes, access to computer, fax, sound equipment etc	1	2	3	4	5
I like to work with children	1	2	3	4	5
My own childhood was so difficult so I must help others have a better childhood	1	2	3	4	5
My own childhood was so good so I must help others have a better childhood	1	2	3	4	5
It was not really much to do, so I thought why not be a volunteer	1	2	3	4	5
Because of pressure from family/friends/others	1	2	3	4	5
I get money	1	2	3	4	5
I get experience	1	2	3	4	5
I develop my personality	1	2	3	4	5
I get challenges	1	2	3	4	5
I get something to go to everyday	1	2	3	4	5
I can go abroad	1	2	3	4	5
Because of my religious beliefs	1	2	3	4	5

## 5. You and your relationship to the NGO

What is your first memory with the NGO?

(continue on the back of this page if you want to)

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Please circle the number most appropriate for you after each statement. The numbers indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement

1 = strongly agree

4 = disagree

2 = agree

5 = strongly disagree

3 = neutral

I don't have any special relationship to the NGO or the staff/volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Some of my best friend/s is/are in the NGO	1	2	3	4	5
It is like a family	1	2	3	4	5
"You can take me out of the N, but you can never take the NGO out of me"	1	2	3	4	5
As time goes by, I will get very attached to the NGO	1	2	3	4	5
I am very committed to the NGO	1	2	3	4	5
The other volunteers see me as very committed to the NGO	1	2	3	4	5
The staff sees me as very committed to the NGO	1	2	3	4	5

If you consider yourself as new in the NGO, go to 6a, otherwise continue with the next two statements

As time has passed, my relationship with the NGO has changed	1	2	3	4	5
As time has passed, the relationship has changed for the better	1	2	3	4	5

## **6. You and the children with 'problem behaviour' in the Life Skills programme**

**6a)** The main target group for the Life Skills Programme is children with 'problem behaviour'. Think about a child you once saw, showing problem behaviour in school. What did this child do? (continue on the back of this page if you want to)

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**6b) 20 Children with problem behaviour will be selected to go to the Life Skills camp**

How do you think this group should be selected and who should do it?  
(continue on the back of this page if you want to)

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**6c)** What do you think should be the criteria for being a part of the group of 20 children who are going to the Life Skills camp?  
(continue on the back of this page if you want to)

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**6d)** What do you think are the 3 main reasons for 'problem behaviour'?  
(continue on the back of this page if you want to)

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Please circle the number most appropriate for you after each statement. The numbers indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement

1 = strongly agree

4 = disagree

2 = agree

5 = strongly disagree

3 = neutral

### School-based reasons for 'problem behaviour'

There are too many children in the class	1	2	3	4	5
There are not enough teachers in the class	1	2	3	4	5
The classroom is too small	1	2	3	4	5
The children are bored at school	1	2	3	4	5
The playground is too small	1	2	3	4	5
The playground does not have enough equipment	1	2	3	4	5
There are not enough ways in which children can express themselves creatively at school	1	2	3	4	5
The children don't get enough to eat	1	2	3	4	5

### Home-based reasons for 'problem behaviour'

By "care givers" is meant those who take care of the children. This is not always the parents but can be aunts & uncles, grandparents, older siblings, staff at children's home etc.

Parents are divorced/have split up	1	2	3	4	5
The care givers are alcohol misusers	1	2	3	4	5
The care givers are drug misusers	1	2	3	4	5
The children do not get enough attention	1	2	3	4	5
The children come from poor families	1	2	3	4	5
The children live in bad housing conditions	1	2	3	4	5
The children must compete with their siblings for attention	1	2	3	4	5
The children must compete with their siblings for food, money or clothes	1	2	3	4	5
The children are physically abused	1	2	3	4	5
The children are sexually abused	1	2	3	4	5
The children are psychologically abused	1	2	3	4	5
The children lives in home where the care givers are violent to each other	1	2	3	4	5

## Other reasons

Peer pressure	1	2	3	4	5
The children watch too much TV	1	2	3	4	5
The children don't have good role models	1	2	3	4	5
The children are threatened by gangsters	1	2	3	4	5
The children are recruits for gangs	1	2	3	4	5
The children are gangsters	1	2	3	4	5
The children have a 'problem behaviour' diagnosis	1	2	3	4	5
The children drink alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
The children use drugs	1	2	3	4	5
The children feel unhappy	1	2	3	4	5
The children feel unsafe	1	2	3	4	5
The children have low self esteem	1	2	3	4	5
The children have high self esteem	1	2	3	4	5

If you can think of any other reasons, please note these on the backside of this page

## 7. You as a primary school child, grade 4-7

7a) Please think back to the time when you were in grade 4-7. How will you describe those years? (continue on the back of this page if you want to)

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While still thinking back to your time in grade 4-7, please circle the number most appropriate for you after each statement. The numbers indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement

1 = strongly agree

4 = disagree

2 = agree

5 = strongly disagree

3 = neutral

### When I was in grade 4-7

There were too many children in the class	1	2	3	4	5
There were not enough teachers in the class	1	2	3	4	5
The classroom was too small	1	2	3	4	5
I was bored at school	1	2	3	4	5
The playground was too small	1	2	3	4	5
The playground did not have enough equipment	1	2	3	4	5
There were not enough ways in which I could express myself creatively at school	1	2	3	4	5
I did not get enough to eat	1	2	3	4	5



By caregivers is meant who were taking care of you. This is not always the parents but can be aunts & uncles, grandparents, older siblings, staff at children's home etc.

My parents are divorced/have split up	1	2	3	4	5
My caregivers were alcohol misusers	1	2	3	4	5
My caregivers were drug misusers	1	2	3	4	5
I did not get enough attention	1	2	3	4	5
I come from a poor family	1	2	3	4	5
I lived in bad housing conditions	1	2	3	4	5
I had to compete with my siblings for attention	1	2	3	4	5
I had to compete with my siblings for food, money or clothes	1	2	3	4	5
I was abused (physically, sexually or psychologically/emotionally)	1	2	3	4	5
I lived in a home where the care givers were violent to each other	1	2	3	4	5

There was a lot of peer pressure	1	2	3	4	5
I watched too much TV	1	2	3	4	5
I didn't have good role models	1	2	3	4	5
I was threatened by gangsters	1	2	3	4	5
I was a recruit for gangs	1	2	3	4	5
I was a gangster	1	2	3	4	5
I had/have a 'problem behaviour' diagnosis	1	2	3	4	5
I was drinking alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
I used drugs	1	2	3	4	5
I felt unhappy	1	2	3	4	5
I felt unsafe	1	2	3	4	5
I had low self esteem	1	2	3	4	5
I had high self esteem	1	2	3	4	5

7b) Were you a child with behaviour problems in grade 4-7?  
yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_

7c) If you answered yes, who classified you as having 'problem behaviour'?  
please put an X in the box/boxes most appropriate for you

Your parents/care givers	Your friends	A doctor
Your teacher	Your self	Other

## 8. Your contribution to the children

**8a)** Please circle the number most appropriate for you after each statement. The numbers indicates to what extent you agree with each statement

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = neutral

4 = disagree

5 = strongly disagree

My life experience is valuable when I work with the children who shows 'problem behaviour'	1	2	3	4	5
I am doing a good job because I can rely on my own experiences from my child hood	1	2	3	4	5

**8b)** In what ways do you contribute positively to the children who show 'problem behaviour'? (continue on the backside of this page if you want to)

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## 9. The Life Skills programme

9a) Mention two important factors for the Life Skills programme to be a success

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Please circle the number most appropriate for you after each statement. The numbers indicates to what extent you agree with each statement

1 = strongly agree

4 = disagree

2 = agree

5 = strongly disagree

3 = neutral

9b) The Life Skills programme is going to be a success because

It is good cooperation with the schools	1	2	3	4	5
The manual provides the necessary information	1	2	3	4	5
The training for the volunteers was appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
It is good supervision of the volunteers during the implementation of the Life Skills programme	1	2	3	4	5
The communication within the NGO is good	1	2	3	4	5
The volunteers work well together	1	2	3	4	5
The volunteers and the project manager work well together	1	2	3	4	5
The volunteers and the line manager work well together	1	2	3	4	5
The volunteers and the NGO manager work well together	1	2	3	4	5
The children are looking forward to the sessions	1	2	3	4	5
The children follows the volunteer's instructions	1	2	3	4	5
The volunteers are committed to the programme	1	2	3	4	5
The staff is committed to the programme	1	2	3	4	5

9c)

The NGO's Life Skills programme will have a positive impact on the children with 'behaviour problems'	1	2	3	4	5
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9d) Did you attend a Life Skills programme when you were in grade 4-7?

yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_

That was the last question, thank you very much!

## Appendix 8.

### Guide for reading the transcripts

The interviews are transcribed as closely as I could to how we were talking (verbatim style), and they obviously contain numerous grammatical irregularities.

- Comma** is used to indicate a short pause, e.g. when you read a sentence with a comma. It would have been more grammatically correct to use the comma when the interviewee was repeating the same word or listing various things, but it is only used when there is a short pause in between the words.
- Full stop** is used when the interviewee finishes a sentence
- ...** Indicates a pause for about 3 seconds or longer
- (IL)** Indicates information lost, which means that I do not understand or hear what the interviewee says.
- (cmt)** clear my throat
- (cht)** clear his or her throat
- Big smile** is used when the interviewee gives a big smile
- Laughing** is used when I am laughing, when the interviewee is laughing, or when both of us are laughing. It is indicated in the transcript who laughs.

## Appendix 9.

### Instruction for drawing a social network map

- Think about the people in your network and write their names in the appropriate category.
- The closer you feel people are to you, the closer to the centre you write them. Don't think about where the person would put you, it is about how close you feel to the person.
- When you have written down the names, start to think about the relationship to them and between them. To show how this is, you draw lines between the persons who know each other (use your own definition, but be consistent). You know all of them, so you don't have to draw the lines between you and them. Draw the lines across the categories, if for example your brother knows your friend. Do not be afraid to mess up the map or that there will be too many names or lines. Take your time! There is no right or wrong social network map.

#### Lines between the persons in your network

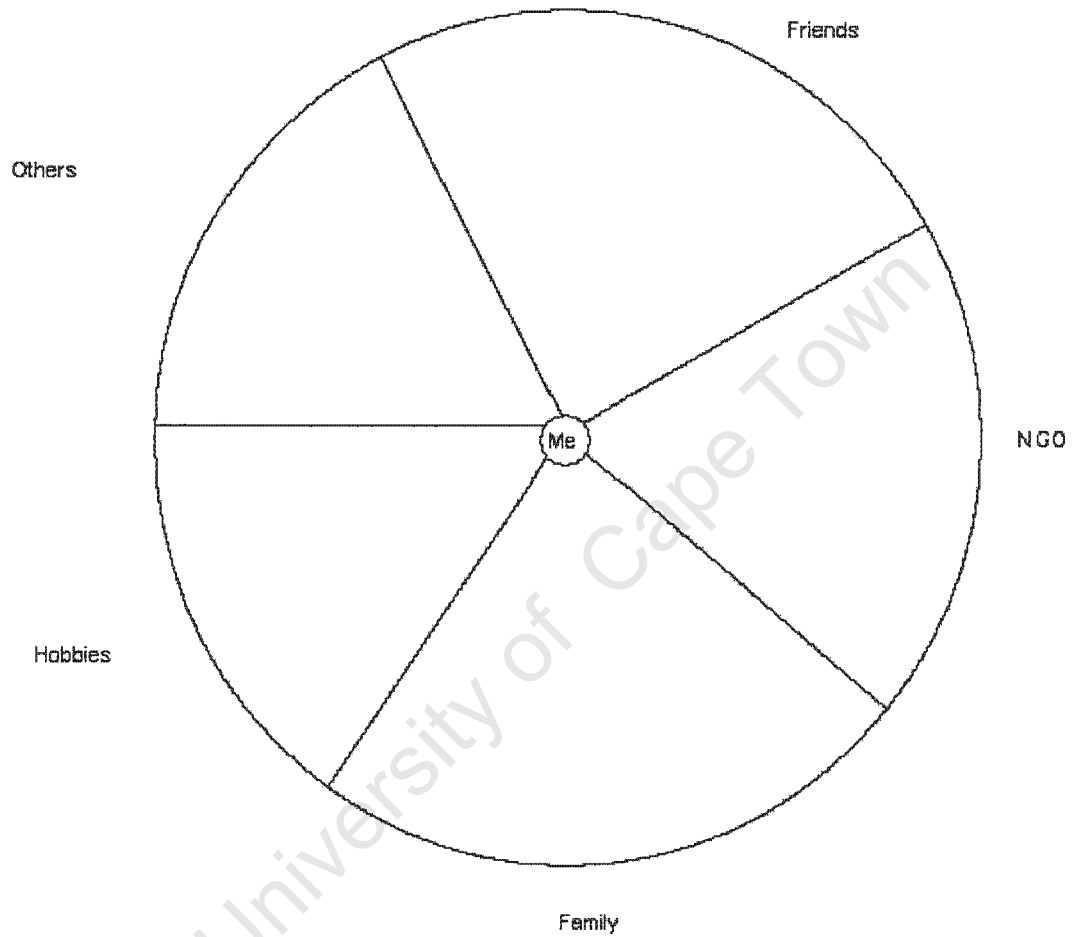
_____	They know each other and there is no conflict between them.
-----	They know each other, but the relationship is not so strong.
.....	The relationship is very weak.
_____#_____	There is a conflict between them.
_____[ ]_____	There is a conflict between them that is so big that they do not talk to each other.
----/------	The relationship is getting/has become weaker.
----+-----	The relationship is getting/will become stronger.
^	Add this to the lines to show that you wish the relationship was better than it is.

#### Symbols

To show your relationship with this person, draw the following symbol next to the name:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| † | The person is dead but is still important to you.  |
| ← | The person lives far away/you don't see her/him so often, but is still important to you. |
| Ω | The person is a role model.  |
| □ | There is a conflict between you and this person.   |
| ♥ | This person gives you important emotional support.                                       |

## A Social Network Map



## Appendix 10.

### Example of field notes

#### **“Counselling and Life Skills for Learners and Parents”, Team Meeting 21.04.04**

I was wondering what to tell them (there were some new people there) and I decided to say I am not going to do the sessions as you guys, but I am here because I study for a master's degree in development studies and social transformation and I am going to write about the volunteers. I brought my book and made notes like everyone else did. I wore a jacket with the NGO emblem and black, cord pants, a black and white scarf, mascara, and my hair was loose. I wanted to dress neutrally and I know I did because whenever I wear something 'non-neutral' some of them comment on it.

#### **Background**

I spoke to Steve yesterday who said there was going to be training for the volunteers in the Life Skills programme, by the 'core facilitators'. The core facilitators have gone through this training, and now it is their turn to train others.

*I assumed (as usual) that it would not start on time; people would not be prepared etc. I did not say anything, but asked Anna if she knew anything about the LS training tomorrow, which she did not. I asked Martha and she said tomorrow from 9 o'clock. So, at least one of those who were supposed to do the training knew about it.*

#### **Before the training started**

I arrived at 9, and none of the volunteers were there (maybe Andy). I did not see Steve either. I started designing a questionnaire for the volunteers. Some of them were coming and went to the garage to wait for the training to start. I could hear Martha say to Samantha, "I am so not prepared". I sat in Manager's office and when he came, he said, "Hi, Nina you are early. The training was supposed to start at 9." "Yes, I know that it is why I am early."

**We were all in the garage**, and Melanie was handing out a programme for today. Andy said Steve had made it (*when, and why was it not distributed long time ago?*). People are waiting in the garage and the Ground Breaker's talk to those next to them. Martha and Anna sit together and talk with Molly. Martha seems uncomfortable (*she likes to be well prepared I know*). Most of the guys are just sitting there, waiting, and it's a sense of 'well, well, what can you expect' in the air. The Manager came in and asked, "Are you gonna be here or across the road?" "Across the road" (*meaning a room in the Housing Department*). David takes down the flipchart, Lee goes to fetch chalks, and Melanie leaves the room to prepare for a session. Lenny and William are not here yet. The new volunteers are mostly sitting still, not talking. Lee, David, Martha and Anna laughs and talks, and someone says where is Lenny (*I am tempted to ask if they have called him or if I should call him, and I'm thinking of sms'ing him saying I am in the office till 11, hope to see you. But I don't and that is good because I don't want to suggest or do anything right now, just observe*). As we are waiting, more people seem to 'loosen up' and are talking. Mostly in their first language. No one speaks to me; I am sitting on the table in the corner, taking notes. I hear Martha, William and David discussing and saying things like "must I do that?" "Who will do sex and sexuality?" "Lenny must do that". People start moving out of the garage and we sit in the hall in the NGO office, waiting. The atmosphere seems to be the same: more waiting. It is 11 volunteers and 3 social work students from UWC. They sit in the other part of the hall, talking to each other only. The 'old' volunteers and those who know each other are close to the door. Maria stands in the middle, I sit in the

middle. Andy comes and talks to her for a while before she goes to those by the door. I ask Andy "Who made the programme" he sits down. "I think Steve did, yea he did". "Which session are you gonna do?" "I only got to know this morning, I'm doing decision making, it is more....I can do everything" "How do you know what you should talk about?" "I must go through the book now" "The book, the, eh, the BLO" "Yes, the BLO manual, it's here in my bag" Andy pats on his bag twice, smiles and leave to another room. Steve passes by and I say "Morning Steve" "Morning Nina" *He seems stressed. He has this wrinkle in his forehead, looking down.* Since William and Lenny is not here yet, I asked Andy "Did someone phone William and Lenny?" "No, they know it's training today" "Is this Steve's programme" *I know it is Steve, but want to check if Andy knows.* "Steve is in charge today. This is the Life Skills programme for primary schools" says Andy just when Alex arrives. *He is looking like a hip-hoper, with baggy pants, a big basketball shirt, a cap and a necklace. He does not usually dress as consistent as today.* He greets everyone by the door, they greet him back and there is small talk amongst them. *He takes up a lot of space. Some of the new volunteers seemed a bit insecure when he entered, but he has a positive attitude and is probably a leader figure in the group.* Steve comes back, saying "it's all right, you can go over, I come now". People are getting up and going out. I ask Alex about a toy he left in my car and we talk about this till all the volunteers left the room *Alex has a gorgeous son.* The flipchart is still there. I say to David, who just walked out the door, "Is this supposed to come with?" "Yes" and we carry it together. I am walking backwards all the time.

**The room** has a big table with 15 chairs and we are altogether 19 people. It's a row at the back where the rest is sitting. During the training the core facilitators get together in a corner. People are coming and going frequently, especially Alex. The Manager comes in for a short while filming during a pair-discussion. He does not announce his arrival or says bye.

### **Opening of the Programme**

Steve says welcome and thank you for being here. "I am very glad to be here today. As Nina knows, we have not had funding for this programme, but now, after doing this for 7 years, we finally have money for it, but it is not even enough. *The Manager has said it is enough for the whole year, because most of it is carried out by volunteers. It is incredible how they have managed to allocate money from other sources to do this programme for such a long time. Lovelife has been the funder since 2001.* We could all be under our warm duvet now *it's raining outside and the wind howls,* so thank you so much for being here. "The sessions we are doing today, this is a guide for what you'll do in the primary schools" The face of the NGO will be you in the classrooms. I will just be there. Some of us will make sure it is running as it should, and that is probably the most boring job. Just because I speak first does not mean I am the leader. We are all leaders. Thank you very much for taking up this challenge *Steve has said that saying thank you is an important part of his life. I am sure he means that.* We are under scrutiny to see if this NGO can perform so that is a responsibility for all of you. So thank you so much."

Steve asks the core facilitators if they are clear on who is going to do what. They are not, so he tells them to go out under the roof and agree on that. He then looks at me and says, Nina, maybe you can tell us about the Urban Renewal Project? *I am not prepared but, sure, no problem, of course I can say something about that, but first I say who I am and that I do here as we who are left doesn't know each other and some seems to be here for the first time.* Steve says she is not spying on us.